STEPS ON THE ROAD OF APPEASEMENT : BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY-MAKING 1931 - 1939

Peijian Shen

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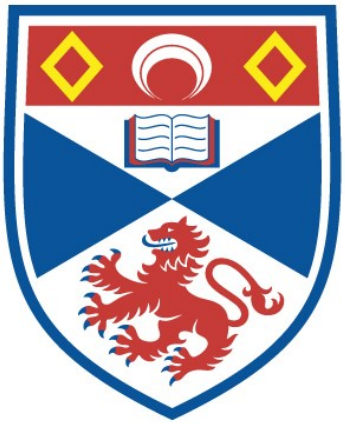

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-- British Foreign Policy Making 1931 - 1939

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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the step-by-step process of foreign policy making within the British Government from 1931 to 1939. It aims to pin-point the origin, evolution and nature of appeasement, the principal policy-makers' viewpoints and activities in policy formulating and their responsibility for encouraging the aggressive powers. In the Introduction, the subjective and objective roots of appeasement are explored, and the Author examines the reasons why it was pursued for nine years without change. Highlighting the shortcomings in the past and current research on the subject, a summary of the approaches used in the thesis is given. The First Chapter surveys policy-making during the Manchurian crisis of 1931, not only a starting point for appeasement, but also to a large extent the main reason for the European appeasement. The Second Chapter shows how the British Government appeased Mussolini in the Italo-Abyssinian conflict of 1935-36, and how appeasement in the Far East started to cause appeasement in Europe. Chapters Three, Four and Five indicate the development of appeasement policy towards Germany during 1936 - 1939, namely, how it was hatched during the Rhineland crisis of 1936, and how it was, through the Anschluss, brought to a climax at Munich in 1938. Chapter Six analyses the policy of the guarantee to Poland and of the Three Power conversations in 1939 with the observation that these represented the Chamberlain Government's efforts to change their policy within the scope of appeasement, but that appeasement led to their failure. In the Conclusion, the various arguments in favour of appeasement are criticised and lessons drawn from that disastrous age.

DECLARATION

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University of St Andrews
Scotland

P.S.
January 1997

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INTRODUCTION

The Second World War was in a real sense partly a resumption of the First World War. Although it restored the balance of power for the time being, the Versailles Treaty did not remove but only temporarily froze the problems in the modern world. Within the Versailles Settlement there were three series of contradictions: contradiction between imperial powers (aggressive powers and Western powers), contradiction between the aggressive powers and weak powers (victim nations and colonies), and contradiction between Western powers and weak powers. In the 1930s, the aggressors' ambitions and expansion not only threatened the survival of victim nations, but they also challenged Western powers, which finally intensified contradictions between the aggressors and the rest of the world, and led to the Second World War.

Versailles itself was ambivalent. On the one hand, it was a product of power politics: five victor powers (Britain, France, America, Italy and Japan) carved up the world at the Paris Peace Conference and utilised the Treaty to legalise their captured interests. However, after four years' bloody struggle, all the powers were exhausted and needed peace no matter what their motives were. The Treaty, on the other hand, therefore, created both the principle and mechanism -- the Covenant and the League-- to maintain world peace. Recognising the victor powers as masters of the world, the League was also a deterrent against the future invasion of victim nations and colonies, which had progressive significance in history. However, given its ambivalence, power politics were the dominant aspect. Placing their own national interests above the League, the Great Powers consistently decided international affairs during the inter-war period, ignoring the rights of victim nations. They would follow the Covenant only when it was in accordance with their desire. This was the basic reason why the League did not work when it faced any challenge.

In the history of the inter-war period, "the German problem" was the core. As a defeated imperial power but not a victim nation, Germany was greatly weakened by her former European partners. The Versailles Treaty deprived Germany of all her colonies. In Europe, Germany's eastern borders were pushed back, and the Rhineland was occupied by the Allied Army for fifteen years, becoming a

demilitarised zone. German-Austrian union was permanently forbidden. According to the Treaty, she had to pay a large sum of reparation and her army was reduced to 100,000. In addition, she was morally charged of "War-Guilt". However, Germany had not been deprived of the military and economic potential of a great power: their army maintained a military backbone; the Ruhr, the industrial centre, was still in their hands, and the reparation had never been fully paid. Although they were forced to sign the Treaty, the Germans still resented the perceived injustice of their loss of Empire, and wished to recover it.

On the other hand, of the great powers, there were two countries whose territorial demands had not been completely satisfied at the Paris Conference -- Italy and Japan[1] -- and these naturally took the German side due to their aggressive ambitions with regard to future adventures. These three were sometimes called the "have-not" powers.

By contrast, the Western Powers, in particular the British and French Empires, which had grabbed vast colonial interest by invasion and expansion in the past few centuries, reached their fullest extents by taking over German and Turkish colonies after the First World War. Chatfield, British First Sea Lord, said in 1934, "We have got most of the world already, or the best parts of it, and we only want to keep what we have got and prevent others from taking it away from us."[2]

For the Western Powers, the most serious threat came from their "have-not" partners. An historian analysed this from an economic point of view:

> Much of the economic argument of the "have-not" powers was understood in the west. ... There was an underlying assumption that Germany and Japan did have real economic claims which had to be respected, and that economic concessions in these areas would go far to eliminating the evident sense of grievance that both powers harboured towards the west.[3]

In general, due to their limited strength, it was not easy for the Western Powers to defend their world-wide interests, which was a little too much to handle. Vansittart, the Permanent Under Secretary, wrote in the F.O. memo on June 8, 1935:

> I have long thought the distribution of this limited globe quite untenable, and quite unjustifiable. Like fools we made it far worse at Versailles. What has happened in regard to Japan; what is happening in regard to Italy; and what is about to happen in regard to Germany, should surely confirm this view to anyone with political antennae.[4]

Therefore, British policy-makers were ready to sacrifice weak powers or even some of their own secondary interests to satisfy aggressors as long as the latter did not jeopardise their vital interests. Chamberlain, the Prime Minister, expressed this view fully on November 26, 1937:

> I don't see why we shouldn't say to Germany 'Give us satisfactory assurances that you won't use force to deal with the Austrians and Czechoslovakians and we will give you similar assurances that we won't use force to prevent the changes you want, if you can get them by peaceful means....'[5]

As the representatives of an imperial power, top British leaders inherently understood and justified the ambitions and expansion of the present aggressors. Chamberlain thought that

> they (the Germans - Author) want to dominate Eastern Europe; they want as close a union with Austria as they can get, without incorporating her in the Reich, and they want much the same thing for the Sudeten Deutsch as we did for the Uitlanders in the Transvaal.[6]

Hoare, the Foreign Secretary, during the Abyssinian crisis, publicly declared that the British Government sympathised with Italy's expansion in Abyssinia.[7] The senior officer in the F. O. found it difficult to persuade the Japanese not to increase military forces in Shanghai in 1932 because the British had done a similar thing in 1927.[8] How could they possibly oppose the Japanese invasion of Manchuria when they themselves had cut Hong Kong off from China by force?

With no legs to stand on against the aggressors, Cabinet members and senior officers in the F. O., in spite of different personalities, took the aggressors' side with few exceptions when they formulated foreign policy during crises in the 1930s. In the Autumn of 1937, Henderson, the British Ambassador in Berlin, suggested to Halifax, who was to visit Hitler in November, that Britain should somehow meet German demands in Austria and Czechoslovakia:

> Morally even we cannot deny the right of Germans living in large blocks on the German frontier to decide their own fate. ... We should, even if we don't like it, sympathise with German aspirations for unity, provided all change be based on the clearly established principle of self-determination.[9]

During his visit to Germany, Halifax told Hitler that England would not stop Germany from altering the map of Eastern Europe, for example, Danzig, Austria, Czechoslovakia, as long as this was achieved by peaceful means.[10] This accorded with Chamberlain's own line of thinking, as he made clear, "What I wanted to do was to convince Hitler of our sincerity and to ascertain what objectives he had in mind...."[11] Eden greatly admired Halifax's visit too. He himself put forward a proposal to the Cabinet on January 1, 1938 that the British Government should offer Germany the colonies and search in return for a general settlement.[12] Like his colleagues, he in fact prevented Britain from being involved in a quarrel with Germany over Central and Eastern Europe by declaring that Britain was interested in that region without undertaking any military commitment. He believed that what a taxi driver said about the German occupation of the Rhineland represented public opinion, namely, that the Germans only went into their back garden.[13] He also had sympathy with the Sudeten Germans.

Among the staff of the F.O., there was a strong tendency that was prepared to come to terms with Germany, allowing her to expand in Central and Eastern Europe. Vansittart, who was known for his anti-German standpoint, advocated this policy and proposed that they should "come to terms with Germany at a price".[14] His successor, Cadogan, offered the same recipe for Government policy-making although his personal relations with Van. was at odds. It was, despite a little exaggeration, described thus:

> Almost everyone, Conservatives, Liberals and Labour alike, regarded the French notion of keeping Germany permanently as a second-class power as absurd, and agreed that the Versailles Treaty must be revised in Germany's favour.[15]

On the contrary, British policy-makers had no sympathy with victim nations. Simon, Foreign Secretary 1931 - 1935, often used the words "wretched" or "foolish" to describe the Chinese.[16] He blamed China for denying the Japanese interests in Manchuria, which provoked Japanese invasion. Hoare took the Abyssinians as "bad neighbours". Henderson called the Czechs "a pig-headed race", who, Chamberlain thought, "were, in fact, themselves responsible for most of the trouble" during the Munich period.[17] It is apparent that due to her similar aggressive experience, Britain had inherently an intimate relationship with the aggressive powers, which made it

impossible for her sincerely to take the victims' side, and help them in their struggle against invasion.

In addition, as leaders of a declining empire which had suffered a great sacrifice during the First World War, the three prime ministers in the 1930s had a fear of war without exception.[18] All of them believed that Britain was not in a position financially, economically, or militarily to fight. War would destroy British interests or even the British Empire. In MacDonald's eyes, war with Japan over Manchuria "was unthinkable" and even "a strong protest might lead to war."[19] Simon did not like the idea of a "war to end war". This argument was best explained by Lord Grey, one of the vice-presidents of the League of Nations Union during the Manchurian crisis, "I do not like the idea of resorting to war to prevent war. ... It is too much like lighting a large fire in order to prevent a smaller one."[20] The crucial point of policy-making in Baldwin's Government was to exclude the country from any danger of war. Baldwin often repeated that Britain was not ready for war and he would not allow the country to be involved in a war if there was "even one chance in a hundred". War to him was "the most fearful terror and prostitution of man's knowledge that ever was known." It "could leave nothing in Europe at last but anarchy...".[21] Chamberlain was more afraid of war than anyone else, saying that war "wins nothing, cures nothing, ends nothing", and in the last war there were "7 million ... young men who were cut off in their prime, the 13 million who were maimed and mutilated, the misery and the sufferings of the mothers or the fathers ... in war there are no winners, but all are losers".[22] Therefore, the top British leaders completely ruled out any possibility of checking aggressors by force.

In brief, due to her imperial nature and fear of war, Britain was more likely to take a standpoint closer to the aggressive powers rather than the victim nations during the inter-war crises. This could be said to constitute the subjective root of appeasement.

On the other hand, the international and domestic situation after the First World War offered the background for appeasement. Although Wilson, the American President, was the principal founder of the League, the United States refused membership owing to their policy of isolationism. Without American participation, the security of world peace was greatly weakened. Russia, however, was completely

excluded from the Settlement until 1934 when she was allowed to join the League. But even after that, her desire to cooperate in collective security was always misinterpreted and rejected by the Western world, particularly by the British Government.

It was apparent that Britain and France were the only Great Powers who were in a leading position in the League to maintain the Versailles Settlement. However, in spite of being a dominant power in the European Continent, France had become politically weak during the inter-war period because of internal confusion. She generally followed the British lead in diplomacy in the 1930s. The situation on the British side was not promising either. After the First World War, Britain was completely exhausted. The victory of the four year war had cost Britain her previous supremacy. During the War, total British casualties were 2,445,000, leaving 1,200,000 disabled afterwards.[23] The war cost £10,000 million, and the National Debt mounted from £650 million (March 1914) to £7,434 million (March 1919).[24] What is more, this island Empire, whose life largely relied on overseas trade, lost a great part of her international market. Her Dominions became more and more independent, and would not offer open markets for her any more and supply her with raw materials as easily as before. Not only were British products challenged by those of Japan and America, but her naval supremacy no longer existed after the Washington Treaty of 1922, by which America got an equal footing with Britain.[25]

In comparison with Japan and America, British industrial production lagged far behind and had not recovered to the 1913 level by 1927.[26] But only two years later, Britain dropped into the abyss of the 1929-32 depression. During the inter-war period, the British Government were so preoccupied with the problems of a capitalist system -- slums, strikes, unemployment and party struggle etc. -- that they had first to consider domestic issues instead of external ones, even though these were graver.

In 1931 Japan invaded Manchuria, becoming the source of war in the world. In 1933 after he came to power in Germany, Hitler immediately announced that Germany withdrew from the Disarmament Conference as well as from the League. In 1935, he openly violated the terms of Versailles by declaring conscription. In 1936, he sent troops to the Rhineland, and in the same year, Italy conquered Abyssinia. Soon the three aggressors came to conclude their Axis according to their unanimous ambitions.

The shift of the balance of power not only threatened world peace, but also challenged the British Empire which had owned vast overseas trade and global colonial interests. However, with her decline, Britain considered only Western Europe as the vital interest that she had to insure. In the face of the disturbance in the Far East, the Mediterranean and Europe, the policy-makers would rather make concessions by sacrificing victim nations in order to seek a new settlement with the aggressors. Appeasement was the very policy emerging to meet this requirement.

A brief review of history is always helpful. At the time that the Japanese invaded Manchuria, Britain was suffering from the abandonment of the Gold Standard. The Labour Government had resigned and the National Government had been recently formed under the premiership of MacDonald. His defence theory was "that arms gave only a false security, that the surest guarantee against aggression was the force of world opinion, that Government should stop worrying about the risks of war and start running risks for peace."[27] Now the Chiefs of Staff, due to the Far Eastern crisis, warned the Government that "The Ten Year Rule"[28] was too optimistic and ignored the danger of the situation. With support from the F.O., they suggested that rearmament should be put on the agenda. However, when the Cabinet considered their reports, Ministers argued that "acceptance of the Chiefs of Staff report must not be taken to justify increased expenditure on defence without regard to the very serious financial and economic situation."[29] Until early 1934, MacDonald still wanted to keep his policy of disarmament although he had reluctantly come to the conclusion that rearmament might be necessary.[30]

Realising that German rearmament was a threat to British as well as European peace, Chamberlain, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, initiated the first expansion of the Air Force in 1934. However, in June he reduced expenditure over five years from 76 million, suggested by Defence Requirements Committee, to 50 million pounds because he "was merely advocating the cheapest way of defence, instead of the best" as he explained later:

> If we were now to follow Winston's advice and sacrifice our commerce to the manufacture of arms, we should inflict a certain injury on our trade from which it would take generations to recover, we should destroy the confidence which now happily exists, and we should cripple the revenue.[31]

MacDonald fully supported his Chancellor to cut down defence expenditure as minuted:

> He was in entire agreement with the Chancellor of the Exchequer from the financial point of view ... The whole question had to be considered in the light of the national income and the commitments which would have to be faced ... The Service Departments must understand that it was not possible to contemplate the bill in full which the General Staff put forward. It was the duty of the General Staff to inform the Cabinet as to the maximum risk and it was the Cabinet's duty to reduce the expenditure involved in accordance with the political situation; and it was the duty of the Chancellor and the Treasury to incur no expenditure which could not reasonably or even possibly be met.[32]

During the election of 1935, Baldwin, the Prime Minister, declared, "I give you my word that there will be no great armaments."[33] Until the spring of 1938, the British policy on rearmament still was "business as usual", meaning that rearmament had to give way to normal industry and trade. It was not strange therefore that the British rearmament in 1930s was left far behind Germany's.

Due to military weakness caused by the Government's defence policy, Chiefs of Staff, when asked by the Cabinet about the risk of war, consistently warned that Britain was not ready to be involved in war. (What else could they possibly say!) These warnings were used in reverse by the Government as evidence to support and justify their concession to the dictators. The appeasers repeated that they had to appease the aggressors because Chiefs of Staff warned that Britain's military force was too weak to fight. In the face of the grave situation created by their own policy, British policy-makers came to a strategic conclusion: Britain could not fight against Germany, Italy and Japan simultaneously with Germany being the principal enemy.[34] On the other hand, the Government never made any real effort to cooperate with her potential allies. For instance, she never fully backed up France when the latter was prepared to resist German expansion. Because of her strategic position, France placed more emphasis on her allies in Eastern Europe, and would fight for them if she could rely on British assistance, whereas Britain did not consider Central and Eastern Europe as her vital interests and hesitated to undertake any new commitments. Moreover, the British Government was afraid that France might go too far and spoil the hope of a settlement with Germany. Nor did they whole-heartedly seek co-operation with the United States as both sides were reluctant to take responsibility in

an arrangement against aggression. The British Government particularly feared that co-operation with America would offend Japan and "cut across" their efforts to improve relations with Italy and Germany. Nor did they sincerely win over assistance from Russia, due to their underestimation of Soviet forces, and a hatred and fear of Communism.[35] In fact, they perhaps hated Communism even more than Nazism. Baldwin told the Cabinet after Hitler's re-occupation of the Rhineland that the French "might succeed in crushing Germany with the aid of Russia, but it would probably only result in Germany going Bolshevik."[36] "If there is any fighting to be done," he said to Churchill, "I should like to see the Bolsheviks and the Nazis doing it."[37] Chamberlain shared the same attitude, as his Private Secretary Douglas-Home reviewed in 1962:

> Chamberlain, like many others, saw Communism as the major long-term danger. He hated Hitler and German Fascism, but he felt that Europe in general and Britain in particular were in even greater danger from Communism.[38]

Being on her guard against the Soviets, Britain was not able to take a firm stand against Germany. Without Russian back-up, small countries in Central and Eastern Europe, which had been restored or newly created by the Treaty, were wide open to German invasion. Above all, Britain never organised collective security in the League against aggressions, because she was afraid that it would be provocative to the aggressors, who would damage British interests all over the world, interests that Britain had no power to defend. All this further weakened Britain herself and her potential allies, while Germany, Italy and Japan strengthened their Axis.

Under these circumstances, the British Government turned to a conciliatory policy -- appeasement -- to avoid the challenge. Based on their own assumption which had never been proved by any substantial evidence, the appeasers believed that the aggressors' ambitions were limited. After the Rhineland crisis, the Cabinet maintained their decision that they would search for a settlement with Germany as soon as possible by making concessions. If this settlement could be reached, diplomacy would remove the heavy burden from national finance and even disarmament could be expected.[39] Therefore, in the Government's view, appeasement would not only save money, but also save Britain from being challenged.

However, it is a misunderstanding to claim that rearmament was in any case contradictory to appeasement. As a policy which in theory was one of concession but not surrender, appeasement required rearmament to a certain extent for support. Being closely inter-related, appeasement and rearmament offered a premise to each other: appeasement could reduce the financial burden of rearmament, and a limited rearmament was supposed to enforce the position when concessions were sought. Chamberlain told the Cabinet, "In our foreign policy we were doing our best to drive two horses abreast, conciliation and rearmament. It was a very nice art to keep these two steeds in step."[40] It explained why, while expenditure on rearmament continued to increase slowly from 1934 to 1939, appeasement was a parallel policy which was brought to a climax.

In short, Britain's economic, political and military decline gave her no confidence in facing the challenge from the "have-not" powers. She would rather calm them down by paying them a price than check them by coercive means. This could be described as the objective root of appeasement.

In spite of these subjective and objective factors, appeasement was not inevitable because there were practical alternatives, proposed by the opposition, which were open to the Government. In the 1930s, the opposition in the House consisted of the Labour Party, Liberal Party and some Conservative dissidents such as Churchill, Eden (after his resignation), Amery and Cecil (Leader of League of Nations Union). However, opposition to the Government did not necessarily mean opposition to appeasement. For instance, although they sometimes delivered mild criticism, Amery and Eden were generally in agreement with the Government foreign policy, and the latter, in particular, supported the Munich business.[41]

In other opposition quarters, the Labour party advocated the policy of supporting the League and using coercive measures -- economic sanctions backed up by military force -- against the aggressor. They voted for armament for "collective security" though they opposed increasing expenditure for national defence.[42] The Liberals held a similar ground. They, in fact, cooperated with Labour over most issues of foreign affairs.[43] The League and collective security were also emphasised by Cecil, who was one of the founders of the League. He had seriously criticised the Government's concession to the aggressors since 1931; however, he did not give very much thought

to the alternative course perhaps because he "did not, indeed, foresee what a terrible price" they had to pay for appeasement.[44] The most outstanding anti-appeaser in Parliament, however, was Winston Churchill, who proposed both rearmament and collective security action under the League. In November 1936, he appealed for Britain and France, due to their military inferiority to Germany to "gather round them all the elements of collective security or, ... combined defensive strength against aggression" under the League.[45] In 1938, he went further to put forward his proposal of "Grand Alliance" as a deterrent against German invasion of Czechoslovakia. Despite his anti-Communist standpoint, he emphasised the importance of an alliance with Russia.

The weakness of the opposition fell into two aspects: firstly, there were some flaws in their own proposals. For example, Labour and the Liberals opposed rearmament and they did not press the Government to take action during the Rhineland crisis although Attlee warned, "No sympathy for the injustices inflicted on the German people by the Versailles Treaty should blind us to the true nature of the act of the German Government."[46] Attlee also supported Chamberlain's going to Munich on the condition that "every member of this House is desirous of neglecting no chance of preserving the peace without sacrificing principles."[47] Secondly, although they were loosely connected, the opposition did not form a solid coalition, and sometimes failed to act jointly in imposing pressure on the Government.[48] In addition, there existed serious divergence between them over some issues. For example, in 1934, the Liberal Leader, Herbert Samuel, sharply criticised Churchill's proposal of increasing Air Force as "the language of a Malay running amok ... the language of blind and causeless panic".[49] This further weakened their own position.

Among the public, there was a loud support for taking a firm stand against the aggressor during the Manchurian crisis. In the Peace Ballot of 1935 there were five questions about peace and war. The result of the total votes (11,559,165) showed that the majority of the people preferred checking aggression by military and non-military measures.[50] Shortly before the Anschluss, three polls were organised by the British Institute of Public Opinion to test the public's attitude towards the Government's foreign policy. Replies to the question, "do you favour Mr Chamberlain's foreign policy?" were recorded: Yes: 26%, No: 58%, No opinion

16%.[51] During the Munich period, Halifax realised, when he telegraphed Chamberlain at Godesberg on September 23, that "the great mass of opinion seems to be hardening in sense of feeling that we have gone to the limit of concession."[52] After Munich, only 28% in an opinion poll of February 1939 considered that Chamberlain's policy would work.[53] On the other hand, there was a phenomenon in favour of appeasement in the 1930s. However, this phenomenon has been unduly exaggerated in the past because, according to substantial evidence, it was, to a great extent, created by the Government, using various means.[54]

Generally speaking, public opinion in the 1930s was varied[55] and because of this, it did not form a pressure great enough to alter the conciliatory course that the British Government adopted. However, the blame should not be put on the public because policy-making was the Government's job. Although the proposals of the opposition were not perfect, their direction was right. If the policy-makers had listened to and taken the correct points from them, British foreign policy might have pursued the better course. In other words, if the Government had fully co-operated with France, America and Russia, and effectively organised a collective security under the League, Britain would have been stronger than her enemies in spite of her military weakness. The aggressors could have been checked one by one, which would have ruled out the risk of facing three enemies simultaneously. Or if the Government had speeded up rearmament as quickly as possible with the sacrifice of some economic benefit, Britain would not have suffered so greatly at the first stage of War even if the aggressors had not been checked.

However, all this pressure and criticism had little influence on policy-making. The top British leaders chose appeasement and insisted on it for almost ten years even though their policy had been set back time after time. Apart from the roots of appeasement that have been discussed above, the explanation can be found in the following observations:

Firstly, the policy-makers had never really listened to the opposite views. MacDonald disliked "admitting his ignorance of a problem even to the expert." Baldwin, seeming to rely largely on experts, "was in reality a dictator. His personality was very strong and almost irresistible."[56] Chamberlain was unfortunately more stubborn and of a closed mind. He said, "I am completely convinced that the course I

am taking is right and therefore cannot be influenced by the attack of my critics."[57] He always felt his superiority to others although he knew very little about foreign policy. He liked a "yes-men" Cabinet and got it after the resignations of Eden and Cooper. Under his long premiership, he and his closest Ministers formed the Inner Cabinet and the Foreign Policy Committee to determine policy. This small circle of politicians turned a deaf ear to any criticism and suggestions from Churchill, the Labour Leaders and other critics. They even treated the information from secret sources in the same way.[58] Not only did Chamberlain refuse any criticism from outsiders, but he also rejected different views from other ministers. If any or most Cabinet members did not agree with him, Chamberlain would, as he did during Munich, insist on his own course without consulting the others. His colleagues, including Halifax and Hoare, did not insist on their different opinion to the extent of resignation because they agreed in principle with appeasement. Any divergence between them and their Prime Minister was only technical. They themselves, like Chamberlain, preferred to listen to what they liked to hear no matter whether it was correct or not. Therefore, Henderson's advice, in spite of misleading the Government, was generally welcome, and Wilson, who knew nothing about diplomacy, became Chamberlain's confidential adviser (Halifax also found him useful). As a part of the policy-making mechanism, the F.O. usually formulated several different proposals for Cabinet needs, among which only those along the line of appeasement would be chosen. As for the proposals which might not meet with the Cabinet approval, they would be suppressed or abandoned at the early stage of policy-making within the F.O. In addition, the F.O. was only able to advise the course, but they had no rights to push the Cabinet to accept what they recommended. After all, most senior officers were quite happy with a policy of coming to terms with the aggressors although sometimes they felt their superiors had gone too far. The position of the Chiefs of Staff, however, was worse than the F.O. because they could not be sure how much of their advice would be taken into account during policy-making. Their duty, as MacDonald stipulated, was "to inform the Cabinet as to the maximum risk".[59] In other words, policy-making was not their business. Strictly guided by the instructions of the Cabinet, they had to investigate the situation from the angle that ministers required. Their advice, therefore, generally met their

superiors' desire. For example, based on the Government's policy of slow rearmament, they could only advise that Britain was not ready to fight. If they raised a different voice (sometimes they did) -- they suggested accelerating rearmament, and warned about the deterrent value of the Rhineland and the importance of an alliance with Russia -- their proposals would be put aside or revised according to the Cabinet will. Under these circumstances, it was impossible for the appeasers to change their way of thinking.

Secondly, there was not a single anti-appeaser in the Cabinet in the 1930s. Eden and Duff Cooper were supposed to be anti-appeasers.[60] However, from the Government's documents, it can be clearly shown that Eden was not an anti-appeaser. On the contrary, he was one of most important founders of appeasement towards Germany because it was he who formulated the basis for appeasement during the Rhineland crisis while Baldwin was not very interested in diplomacy. Although disagreement with Chamberlain over Italy led to his resignation, Eden shared completely the Prime Minister's views on Germany. Cooper resigned because of mobilisation on the eve of Munich, but he had gone along all the way to Munich with the Prime Minister although he had sometimes voiced different views. While Halifax and Hoare also sometimes told Chamberlain of their divergence, they co-operated with the Prime Minister quite happily in spite of their differences of opinion, and all the decisions were made with complete agreement from them.[61] Therefore, the divergence between Chamberlain and the principal Ministers was between appeasers and not between appeasers and anti-appeasers. It was impossible for a Cabinet composed of appeasers to abandon their own policy.

Thirdly, involvement in the process of pursuing appeasement was a vicious circle: 1) leaving Japan unchecked in the Far East made it difficult for Britain to concentrate on Europe, which was one of the reasons leading to European appeasement. On the other hand, in order to come to terms with Germany and Italy, they had to appease Japan further, which, in return, required them to make more concessions in Europe. 2) Policy-makers, against advice from the Chiefs of Staff about the deterrent value of the Rhineland, acquiesced in Hitler's re-occupation of the Rhineland, and then found that there was nothing they could do to prevent the Anschluss because the deterrence had been taken away. However, due to their failure to act during the Anschluss they

put themselves in a more embarrassing position when they faced the possible German invasion in Czechoslovakia because Germany, after her successful annexation of Austria, had surrounded Czechoslovakia on three sides. Because of this, appeasers could more easily justify that they should and had to meet Hitler's demands at Munich. 3) Appeasement was based on the idea that Britain was militarily and economically weak and she should not undertake any new commitment. However, this policy caused dissension and discord between Britain and her potential allies: America became more isolated because she felt Britain let her down in the Manchurian crisis. Russia was finally disappointed by Britain and signed the Soviet-German Pact in 1939 for her own safety. Belgium broke away from Locarno system. As for the Central and East European countries, some of them had been sold by Britain, some of them had become Germany's satellite states. This left Britain and France no reliable ally in the East except Poland, which was crushed immediately by Hitler's lightning war. The result of appeasement was not to strengthen Britain but to make her weaker, which convinced the appeasers that further concessions were the only possible way to hold the situation. 4) Appeasement aimed to reduce the rearmament burden from national finance. However, the graver situation required increasing expenditure on defence. Slowly-increased rearmament was not able to meet the fast increasing challenge. In order to minimise the danger, the appeasers would be in a greater hurry to turn to appeasement. Being caught in this vicious circle, the Government followed the road of appeasement further and further until War broke out.

In addition, the top British leaders were unaware of the nature of the German Nazi, Italian fascist and Japanese militarist, who were a new phenomenon in modern history. As Thorne put it,

> Few of the leading appeasers spoke German or had much knowledge of European history. Few -- even Halifax who had at least read History at Oxford -- had studied *Mein Kampf*. Many in Britain found it hard to credit that Nazism could be quite as appalling as its enemies declared it to be; it was a movement quite beyond the comprehension of men like Baldwin or Halifax, or those who, ... were experienced in Commonwealth spheres rather than nearer home.[62]

Baldwin confessed that he felt it very difficult to judge Hitler. "We none of us know what is going on in that strange man's mind." "He had never been able to find

anyone who could give him really reliable information about Hitler's character and designs."[63] Chamberlain never believed that Hitler would fight for that 10% if he could be offered 90% of what he wanted. All this blinded the appeasers when they were figuring out the policy.

*****

Appeasement is one of the most controversial subjects in the study of history and international relations. According to the dictionary, it means "A policy of making concessions to a potential aggressor in order preserve peace, *spec.* a policy pursued by Britain towards Germany prior to the outbreak of war in 1939."[64] Most Western historians believe that appeasement started either in 1933 when Hitler came to power or in 1937 when Chamberlain took over.[65] Some of them trace its roots back to the years of the First World War, or even earlier to 1854-56 during the Crimean War. Whereas at that time, "the term 'appeasement', a good honest word which made its way into modern English from the old French, means the act of soothing or satisfying." It is said that this positive meaning was kept until the end of 1938.[66]

Many politicians and scholars are critical of this policy because it encouraged the aggressors in their adventure, which finally led to the Second World War.[67] Since "Munich" in 1938 represented a climax of "appeasement", these two terms often replace each other in criticism. Churchill, as a principal anti-appeaser in the 1930s, pointed out, "'Appeasement' in all its forms only encouraged their aggression and gave the Dictators more power". "One of the unhappy consequences of our appeasement policy... had been to convince him (Hitler -- Author) that neither we nor France were capable of fighting a war."[68] Attlee, Leader of the Labour Party, condemned appeasement in 1937 when he said that "the policy of this Government throughout, right on from 1931, had always been to try and appease the aggressor by the sacrifice of weaker states, but the more you yield to the aggressor the greater his appetite."[69] Many historians considered "appeasement" and "Munich" as "pejorative words", referring to a policy of "feckless, cowardly, and counterproductive yielding".[70] Namier condemns, "At several junctures it could have been stopped without excessive effort or sacrifice, but... appeasers aided Hitler's work."[71] Denunciation from Margaret George is also very sharp:

> In even the Tory view of the matter there is broad consensus that British foreign policy in the 1930's was an unqualified disaster. Led by

> the government of Stanley Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain, the British nation pursued the will-o'-the-wisp of peace with Fascism, peace at any price, peace -- as one Conservative put it -- "at any cost in humiliation". ... Britain had lost not only the great goal of peace but in judgement of the world, and in the shamed awareness of her own citizens, she had lost an incalculable amount of prestige and respect.[72]

Appeasement was not only criticised by Western scholars but also by historians of the former Soviet Union and of China. Apart from general criticism, the Soviets thought that the appeasers deliberately led Germany to go east, invading the U.S.S.R.[73] Chinese scholars try to find out how a weak power can prevent her own interests from being betrayed by Great Powers who adopted appeasement. One of their observations is that a weak power, if she decided to defend her independence, should rely on her own people. Winning over possible aid from Western Powers, she must not put her destiny into their hands.

Another school of commentators hold a quite mild attitude, thinking that appeasement was wrong and ineffective on one hand, and searching for justification for it on the other. Parker analysed,

> Chamberlainite appeasement, it is true, was not a feeble policy of surrender and unlimited retreat. ... His policy meant intervention in continental Europe to induce Hitler's Germany to insist only on expansion so limited that it would not threaten the safety or independence of the United Kingdom. In retrospect this appears a bold, venturesome policy, certain, given the ambitions of Hitler, to lead to an Anglo-German war.

He, however, concludes,

> the balance of evidence points to counter-revisionist interpretations. Led by Chamberlain, the government rejected effective deterrence. Chamberlain's powerful, obstinate personality and his skill in debate probably stifled serious chances of preventing the Second World War.[74]

Keith Middlemas, the author of *Diplomacy of Illusion*, gives his idea that appeasement is "the policy of meeting German demands and grievances without asking for firm reciprocal advantages; asking instead only for future 'mutual understanding' ". He thinks that this policy is generally accepted as "the nadir of British weakness," and as "an inevitable consequence of the British predicament, a realistic attempt to hold the dictators at bay in Europe."[75]

However, appeasers and their supporters, sparing no effort, defend the policy, as Sir Samuel Hoare said,

> Appeasement did not mean surrender, nor was it a policy only to be used towards the dictators. To Chamberlain it meant the methodical removal of the principal causes of friction in the world. The policy seemed so reasonable that he could not believe that even Hitler would repudiate it.
>
> Appeasement was not his personal policy. Not only was it supported by his colleagues; it expressed the general desire of the British people. This is a fundamental consideration in judging his action.[76]

Feiling, the author of Chamberlain's biography, commented with sympathy that the Munich policy was based on the Prime Minister's genuine hope for peace.[77] A.J.P. Taylor goes as far as to admire Munich:

> The settlement at Munich was a triumph for British policy, which had worked precisely to this end; not a triumph for Hitler, ... Nor was it merely a triumph for selfish or cynical British statesman, ... It was a triumph for all that was best and most enlightened in British life; a triumph for those who had preached equal justice between peoples; a triumph for those who had courageously denounced the harshness and short-sightedness of Versailles.[78]

Certainly, debates will continue. (Further discussion will be seen in the Conclusion.)

Although a huge number of books have been published on the subject in the past few decades, research on appeasement is far from complete. The main shortcoming is twofold: firstly, Western scholars have a tendency to consider appeasement only as a policy in Europe rather than a global one. In their studies, few have linked British Far Eastern policy with general appeasement. Since British foreign policy towards Germany, Italy and Japan was an organic whole, neglect of Far Eastern policy in the study of general appeasement results in a one-sided understanding, which makes it impossible to see the whole picture of appeasement. Secondly, the previous studies focus mainly on what appeasement is, and when and why it happened. Few describe how it was made. The Author of this thesis believes that without thorough survey of policy-making process, the nature and development of appeasement cannot be fully explored.

In this thesis, the study first examines the Manchurian crisis, which, in the Author's opinion, was the starting point of appeasement on the grounds that 1) British foreign policy towards the Far East and Europe was an organic whole; as Eden said, "I did not regard Europe and the Far East as separate problems."[79] Far Eastern appeasement was in fact one of fundamental reasons for European appeasement. 2) Japan was the first to become the aggressor in the Far East, and her ambition was nursed by this conciliatory policy. From Manchuria to the outbreak of war, British policy-making followed the same line. There was no fundamental difference between the underlying assumptions of policy towards Japan and that towards European aggressors. 3) The Japanese invasion of China set up an example for Mussolini and Hitler. The 1931 crisis was the beginning of the collapse of the League and the prologue to the Second World War.

Based largely on published and unpublished documents, which are quoted verbatim, this thesis concentrates on the main process of appeasement-making within the Government from 1931 to 39, namely, a survey of step-by-step policy formation in the F.O. and policy decision-making in the Cabinet with the purpose of pin-pointing the origin, evolution and nature of appeasement, and the principal policy-makers' viewpoints and activities in policy-formulating and their responsibility for encouraging the aggressive powers and making World War II inevitable.

The thesis also studies the relations between Britain and other related countries such as France, America and the Soviet Union so as to explore why their co-operation against aggression resulted in failure.

In addition, the study of public opinion aims at investigating how the Government misled the public and put fetters on the media in order to create a favourable atmosphere for pursuing appeasement. It also points out that there was a big gap between public opinion and policy-making because throughout the F.O. and Cabinet documents, there is little evidence to suggest that Ministers seriously considered outside opinion. It is understood that the policy was decided by a small political circle, which was almost isolated from public opinion, and in particular from those views which were opposite to the Government's.

According to research done in this thesis, appeasement was an imperial policy for re-settling the world between imperial powers. It was aimed at insuring British vital

interests, while the British Empire was declining, by sacrificing victim nations, acquiescing in invasion or bargaining with aggressive powers so as to reach settlement. Based on imperialist moral standards and political thoughts, it employed the rule of "fair play", equality and justice to Germany and other "have-not" powers, but this rule was not applicable to victim nations and colonies just as freedom in the ancient Roman Empire was the prerogative of its citizens but not of its slaves. Although this policy was, in the appeasers' eyes, very realistic and reasonable, appeasement failed to achieve any of its aims: settlement with the aggressors, avoidance of war, and separation of Japan, Italy and Germany.

The appeasers must be held partly responsible for the Second World War because their policy encouraged and strengthened the aggressive powers. Although the aggressors' ambitions and expansion were the factors that led the war, these factors could not function without certain conditions. Hitler could not strike before 1935 because German rearmament had only just started. He would not consider taking risk of war with the Western Powers during the period of the Rhineland either on the grounds that Germany was not strong enough to contend with Britain and France. If he were to start war in unfavourable conditions then, he would sooner and more easily be beaten. In other words, without the favourable conditions that were created by appeasement, Hitler might not or could not have successfully launched the war. It was appeasement that offered the aggressors this desirable condition. It is, therefore, not exaggerated to say that the aggressors' ambitions and expansion with the help of appeasement made the Second World War inevitable.

1 The Italians' demand for Fiume was turned down by President Wilson although they obtained all that had been promised in the Secret Treaty of London 1915. Japanese ambition in Shantung of China was naturally checked by the Chinese due to the fact that as an associate power, China would not possibly give up her own rights in her own territory.
2 Overy, R.J., *The Origins of the Second World War*, London 1987, p.29.
3 ibid, pp.37-38.
4 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N301.
5 Middlemas, *Diplomacy of Illusion: The British Government and Germany, 1937-39*, London 1972, pp. 137-138. Parker, R. A. C., *Chamberlain and Appeasement: British Policy and the Coming of the Second World War*, London 1993, p.101.
6 Middlemas, p.137; Parker, p. 100.
7 See Chapter 2, p. 83.
8 See Chapter 1, p.38.
9 Birkenhead, *Halifax*, London 1965, p.366.
10 *Documents on German Foreign Policy* D-I, N31; Schmidt, *Hitler's Interpreter*, London 1951, p.77. Also see Chapter 4, p.159 below.
11 Middlemas, p.137.
12 *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, 2nd-XIX, N409.
13 Avon, *Facing The Dictators*, London 1962, pp.346-347. Halifax held the same view. [see Halifax, *Fulness of Days*, London 1957, p.197.]
14 See Chapter 3, pp. 122, 127 below.
15 Gannon, *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*, Oxford 1971, p. 6.
16 Louis, *British Strategy in the Far East 1919-1939*, Oxford 1971, p.186.
17 See Chapter 1, p. 26; Chapter 2, note 13; also Gilbert, M., *The Roots of Appeasement*, London 1966, p.183; Parker, p. 164.
18 Some historians deny this and consider it as genuine hope for peace. [Feiling, *Life of Neville Chamberlain*, London 1946, p.359; Gilbert, p. xii; Eubank, *The Origins of World War II*, Illinois 1969, p.79.] As for discussion, please see Chapter 5, p.246; Conclusion pp.298-299.
19 Marquand, D., *Ramsay MacDonald*, London 1977, p.715.
20 Bassett, *Democracy and Foreign Policy*, London 1952, pp.192-193; Roberts, B., *Sir John Simon*, London 1938, p.294; Feiling, p.261.
21 Middlemas & Barnes, *Baldwin*, London 1969, pp. 758-759.
22 Feiling, p.320.
23 Hirst, F.W., *The Consequences of The War to Great Britain*, Oxford 1934, pp.297-299.
24 Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, London 1938 (I), p.87; Hirst, p.251.
25 ibid, p. 273; Muir, R., *The Political Consequences of The Great War*, London 1930, pp.219-223.
26 Schlote, W., *British Overseas Trade from 1700 to The 1930s*, Oxford 1950, p.51 Table II.
27 Marquand, p.715.
28 After World War I, Britain suffered from economic instability. At the same time massive and rapid demobilisation had begun. In August 1919, the Cabinet assumed that there would no major war for ten years to come, which came to be known as "The Ten Year Rule".
29 Gibbs, *Grand Strategy* (I), London 1976, p.80.
30 Marquand, p.757.
31 Feiling, pp.252-253, 258, 266, 312-314.
32 Marquand, p.760.
33 Middlemas, pp.15-16.
34 Feiling, 253; Templewood, *Nine Troubled Years*, London 1954, p.153.
35 Feiling, p.403. Also see Chapter 6, pp.257-270, & note 24 below.
36 Cab23/83 18(36).
37 Middlemas, p.54 footnote.
38 George, M., *The Warped Vision: British Foreign Policy 1933-1939*, Pittshurg 1965, p.220.
39 Gibbs, p.288.

40 Aster, S., *1939: The Making of the Second World War*, London 1973, p.50.

41 Amery, *The Unforgiving Years 1929-1940*, London 1955, pp.173-175, 262; Cowling, *The Impact of Hitler: British Politics and British Policy 1933-1940*, London 1975, pp.224-227; As for Eden, please see Chapter 4, note 38 below.

42 Parker, pp.308-309, 312; Harris, K., *Attlee*, London 1982, pp.115, 117, 123, 155.

43 Rock, W. R., *British Appeasement in the 1930s*, New York 1977, pp.72-73; Parker, pp.307-308, 314-315.

44 Cecil, *A Great Experiment*, London 1941, pp. 289-290, *All The Way*, London 1949, p.120.

45 Parker, pp.320-321.

46 Harris, p.124; Dalton, *The Fateful Years 1931-1945*, London 1957, p.88.

47 Harris, p.155.

48 Rock, p.79; Chapter 5, p.231 below.

49 Parker, p.320.

50 Please see Chapter 2, note 7 below.

51 Adamthwaite, A., "The British Government and the Media, 1937-1938", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.18 (1983), pp.291-292.

52 DBFP 3rd-II, N1058.

53 Parker, p.327.

54 Adamthwaite, A., "The British Government", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.18 (1983), pp.281-293.

55 It is, however, difficult to generalise about world opinion. In France, opinion on Germany was divided during the 1930s. The French Government were not satisfied with appeasement because they could not obtain a promise of firm and all-out support from Britain should they face German aggression. On the other hand, they had to follow Britain's leadership in diplomacy on the grounds that they relied on the latter when they contended with Germany. The Americans quarrelled with the British only when both sides attempted to cooperate (for example, during the Manchurian crisis). Otherwise, they were, without any enthusiasm, in agreement with British foreign policy because they themselves advocated diplomatic isolationism. As for the Soviet Union, she was strongly critical of appeasement on the grounds that she thought that this policy pushed German expansion towards the East. However, before the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was signed, Russia tried to cooperate with the Western Powers in the first place to fight against aggression, but her efforts were often ignored by Britain. In addition, the victims of aggression such as China, Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia and Poland were suspicious of British policy although they dared not deliver their criticism openly because they relied on Britain's help.

56 Jones, *A Diary with Letters 1931-1950*, London 1954, p.xxxi; Thompson, p.135. Also see Chapter 2, note 5.

57 Middlemas, p.449.

58 Colvin wrote that he had reported to the F.O. many times that Hitler's opposition wanted to bring him down before Munich, and that Germany would attack Poland in spring of 1939, but when he told Halifax and Chamberlain the same story in person, he found that they seemed never to have heard of it.[see Colvin, *Vansittart in Office*, London 1965, pp.303-305; *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, London 1971, p.167.] Hankey also said in 1943, "When the pre-war records are opened on the origins of the war it will be found that the intelligence given was accurate and ample, the opinions sound, and the warnings, though given, were by no means always followed." [Rose, *Vansittart, Study of a Diplomat*, London 1978, p.139 footnote.]

59 See p.8 above.

60 Gilbert & Gott, *The Appeasers*, London 1963, p.11.

61 *Vansittart in Office*, p.303; Templewood, p.291.

62 Thorne, C., *The Approach of War 1938-39*, London 1967, p.16.

63 Middlemas & Barnes, pp.947, 950.

64 *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary.*

65 Gilbert and Gott, *The Appeasers*; George, M., *The Warped Vision: British Foreign Policy 1933-1939*; Middlemas, *Diplomacy of Illusion*.

66 Gilbert, pp.4-5; Adams, R.J.Q., *British Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement 1935-39*, London 1993, pp. 1, 14; Thompson, *The Anti-Appeasers*, Oxford 1971, p.27; George, M., p.3.

67 Martel, G. (ed.) *The Origins of the Second World War Reconsidered*, Boston 1986. p.1.

68 Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, London 1948, pp.194, 381.

69 House of Commons, Debates, 5s Vol.327, col.76.

70 Taylor, Telford, *Munich: the Price of Peace*, London 1979, pp. xiii & 978.

71 Namier, L.B., *Diplomatic Prelude*, London 1948, p.ix.

72 George, p.xv.

73 Maisky, I., *Who Helped Hitler?* London 1964, pp. 103-104, 133.

74 Parker, pp.345, 347.

75 Middlemas, pp.1 & 8.

76 Templewood, *Nine Troubled Years*, London 1954, pp.374-375.

77 Feiling, p.359.

78 Taylor, A.J.P., *The Origins of The Second World War*, London 1972, p.189.

79 Avon., p.523.

CHAPTER 1 Challenge From The Far East

I. THE MANCHURIAN INCIDENT

Japan's ambition in China could be traced back to the beginning of this century. After she beat Russia in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904 - 1905, she replaced Russia's dominant role in Manchuria. On January 1, 1915, the Japanese envoy delivered to Yuan Shi-kai, the Chinese President, "twenty-one demands", which attempted to build up their supremacy in the whole of China. After the mid-1920s, key military officers such as Ishiwara, Nagata, Itagaki and Imamura frequently exchanged views on future territorial design in Manchuria. By the autumn of 1930, the Japanese Chiefs of Staff had worked out three alternatives for their Manchurian adventure: 1) to press the local authority headed by Chang Hsueh-liang to concede more right to Japan; 2) if this failed, the replacement of Chang by a pro-Japanese regime was to be arranged; 3) the final resort was to occupy Manchuria by military operation. The Kwantung army took the liberty of carrying out their third plan in September 1931 although the Tokyo Government decided to act in 1932.[1]

On the night of September 18, 1931 Japanese troops guarding the South Manchurian Railway suddenly attacked Mukden according to "a carefully prepared plan", using as an excuse the blowing up of a section of the railway, an incident which was believed to be created by themselves.[2] Three days later, China appealed to the League Council under Article 11 of the Covenant. Having discussed the appeal, the Council took a decision on September 30 that requested both Japanese and Chinese "to do all in their power to hasten restoration of normal relations between them."[3] On one hand, Japan declared that she had no territorial ambition in China and would withdraw her troops into the railway zone as soon as possible; but one the other hand, she hastened the military operation and occupied the whole of Manchuria by the beginning of 1932. Moreover, on January 28, Japanese forces attacked Shanghai; but this time they did not achieve their aim because of the 19th Chinese army's determined resistance.

From the incident of September 18, 1939 to Tang Ku Armistice of May 1933, the Manchurian crisis lasted a year and a half, during which Britain looked for a policy

trying to solve the dilemma that she faced between offending Japan and sacrificing the Covenant.

II. THE IMPORTANT POLICY-MAKERS IN MACDONALD'S GOVERNMENT

In the First National Government formed in 1931, MacDonald, as "a bookish Premier", was aloof from his colleagues, "sensitive to unfriendly critics" and "shrank from exposing his whole mind". His arrogance was such that he "disliked admitting his ignorance of a problem even to the expert." Being realistic too, he "only wanted to achieve what was practical."[4] In the Cabinet, he inspired loyalty from his colleagues although he, with his suspicious nature, never had complete trust in them.[5] He relied heavily on Baldwin[6] "to deal with the economic crisis" and the latter, being in accord with MacDonald on foreign affairs, once said to Thomas Jones[7] that "he dislikes the Chinese."[8]

Drawing on his considerable knowledge and skills in foreign affairs, the Prime Minister usually "used his prerogative of diplomatic intervention freely". As for the Far Eastern crisis, he thought it was "unthinkable" to have a war against Japan, and approved of Anglo-Japanese *rapprochement* though he laid a stress on Anglo-American relations.[9]

However, his third primiership since 1931 had been "a sad diminuendo of failing powers, ebbing authority and gathering derision" partly because of decline in his health. "He was already a tired man" with a worsening eye problem which accelerated his failure.[10] At the beginning of the crisis, he gave hardly any precise instructions to the British Delegates to the League so that they did not know what line should be adopted to handle the matter.[11] When the Japanese created the Shanghai incident in early 1932, MacDonald's eye operation kept him away from his office for six weeks although he still supervised foreign policy.[12]

His appointment of Simon as the Foreign Secretary surprised many because Simon's "contacts hitherto had been mostly with the domestic side of the policy". The decision was made due to "party exigencies".[13] Through the Cabinet minutes, it seems that he usually took his Foreign Secretary's advice although there had been "fierce disagreements" between them in earlier years.[14]

Simon was "a shy man" with hesitating characteristics, which made it difficult for him to be popular.[15] He showed great intelligence when he analysed complicated problems, but he lacked a decisive manner in handling them. Chamberlain and Eden made similar comments on his personality and capability as the former said, Simon "can always make an admirable speech in the House, to a brief, but ... the fact is that his manner inspires no confidence, and that he seems temperamentally unable to make up his mind to action when a difficult situation arises."[16] Although he was not highly admired by his colleagues, Simon never criticised them in his memoirs. Perhaps because of his tact, he got along very well with three prime ministers in the 1930s, and after 1935 when he was not in charge of the F.O., he continued to exert his influence on diplomacy, as one of the "Big Four" in the Cabinet, who were dominant in foreign policy making in late 1930s. During the Manchurian crisis, Simon played a very important part in shaping foreign policy. Like many of his colleagues, he disliked the Chinese, often referring them as being "wretched" or "foolish".[17] He clearly showed his standpoint towards the Sino-Japanese dispute:

> although Japan has undoubtedly acted in a way contrary to the principles of the Covenant... This is not a case in which the armed forces of one country have crossed the frontiers of another in circumstances where they had no previous right to be on the other's soil.[18]

In the Foreign Office, Vansittart, the Permanent Under Secretary, was one of the most important members whom Simon generally relied on.[19] His role in policy making will be continuously explored in the following chapters. In regard to the Far Eastern crisis, Van. thought that "the Chinese had been asking for trouble, and they got it."[20] In his opinion, Britain was "incapable of checking the Japanese in any way" unless the United States were "eventually prepared to use force."[21] As a senior member of the Defence Requirements Committee, he was in a key position to formulate the basis for the Government's policy of accommodation with Japan.

In addition, other members such as Wellesley, the Deputy Under-Secretary, Mr Pratt, the Chief Adviser to the Far Eastern Department and Mr Orde, Head of the Far Eastern Department, also played an important role in policy-making.[22] All of them justified the Japanese aggression. In the words of Pratt:

> In Manchuria the Japanese as regards the fundamental issues at stake had a great deal of right on their side. The Chinese were almost entirely in the wrong.[23]

Wellesley expressed it in more detail,

> It may be difficult to justify on legal grounds the present developments of Japan's treaty rights in Manchuria; but on moral and material grounds I am inclined to question whether, ... a country of the size and wealth of China is justified in obstructing the economic development of her more active and enterprising neighbour to the general detriment of world interests.[24]

> A major postulate of that policy and of the safeguarding of those interest is the maintenance of really cordial relations with Japan, ... His Majesty's interest in the territorial status of Manchuria is infinitely less than their interest in maintaining cordial relations with Japan.[25]

Like the officers above, Orde disliked pressurising measures such as excluding Japan from the League or withdrawing the Ambassador from Tokyo on the grounds "that the only kind of pressure which will do anything but harm is the unspoken kind which may in time strengthen the influence of the moderate thinkers in Japan." Therefore, the imposition of sanctions or any other pressure on Japan were not at all favoured by him.[26]

Apart from the staff above, some influence on policy-making came from diplomats such as Lord Cecil, the Chief British Delegate to the Council of the League; Mr A. Cadogan, Adviser on League of Nations Affairs; Drummond, Secretary-General of the League; Lindley, the British Ambassador in Tokyo; Lampson, Minister in Peking; and Lindsay, the British Ambassador in Washington. They reported first-hand information together with their advice to the F. O. and put the instructions from the Government into action.

In general, British foreign policy was usually set out by the F.O. and decided by the Cabinet in the early 1930s. During the Manchurian crisis, the Cabinet made its decisions generally based on the suggestions from the F. O. since it was distracted by domestic problems. The F. O., therefore, was the key formulator of Government policy in the Far East.

III. THE FIRST PHASE OF THE CRISIS: September 1931 - January 1932

1. British Policy-making

When the incident occurred, Britain was deep in 1929 - 32 depression. She was forced off the Gold Standard, and the number of unemployed was increasing: 2.5 million by the end of 1930, 2.7 million by the middle of 1931, and growing to 3 million in early 1933. Both richer and poorer classes were not very much concerned about the Far Eastern crisis.[27] Although the Press revealed some conflicting views, the issue attracted more attention, only after the General Election in November, from the editorial comment of the principal newspapers such as the *Times*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Daily Herald*, the *Daily Express*, the *News Chronicle* and so on. In the House, debates in the full sense on the subject did not take place until late March 1932.[28] Mr. Thorne observed,

> Neither the Labour nor the Liberal members of the Government were to display any strong predilection for China's cause as opposed to that of Japan; few of the Tories were to be uncritically pro-Japanese; over the decisive matter of Britain's interests and resources in the area, there was to be unanimity.[29]

MacDonald's First National Government, which had come to power a month before, was so preoccupied with domestic problems that the Far Eastern crisis did not attract the Government's full attention. Only mentioning the Manchurian crisis briefly, the Ministers did not discuss the Sino-Japanese dispute until November 11.[30] Meanwhile, due to "some disquieting news from Geneva", MacDonald requested Lord Reading, the Foreign Secretary at the time, to attend the Council meeting on October 14 in order to handle the problem. "We ought to be in a position at the Council to take a leading part on a well thought out policy", he said to Reading.[31] But as a matter of fact, neither the Cabinet nor the F. O. had any ready-made policy to cope with the situation.[32]

Lindley from Tokyo sent back his point of view:

> In considering Chinese appeal His Majesty's Government will no doubt give due weight both to fact that Chinese have followed most exasperating policy in Manchuria where they have straightforwardly [consistently] attempted to undermine Japanese position which after all rests largely on treaty rights; and to the obvious probability that Japanese action in Manchuria will react favourably on British interests in Manchuria [China].[33]

He was sure that the League would run "a grave risk" if it interfered in the Sino-Japanese dispute because the Japanese would not yield.[34] He further persuaded Lord Reading to press the Chinese for moderation rather than to press the Japanese,[35] but his suggestion was opposed by Lampson in Peking because to counsel the Chinese to be moderate was, in his words, "like counselling moderation to the hare with the hounds already close on his heels."[36] Lampson explicitly regarded the Japanese action as "an instance of brutal application of ruthless force against a weaker neighbour" and it might ruin the League.[37] He urged Reading that Britain should take some action.[38] At Geneva, Cecil suggested that the Council should demand the withdrawal of Japanese troops with a view to negotiations. In view of the fact that the French Ambassador in Tokyo, instructed by his Government, was to make a protest against the Japanese Government for their deteriorating the Manchurian situation, he urged that the Foreign Secretary should instruct Lindley to work on similar lines.[39]

Within the F. O., most staff shared Lindley's opinion that they would rather ignore the spirit of the Covenant than offend Japan.[40] Pratt doubted,

> whether the strict and academic application of League principles is the best method of dealing with such a situation.[41]

But Cadogan took the opposite view, and he retorted,

> Is it quite fair to talk of "academic" application? Is it possible for the League not to maintain the great principle (no settlement by force) of the Covenant and of the Kellogg Pact? ... can she do less than uphold this fundamental principle? ... If she willingly abandons it, she has ceased from that moment to exist.[42]

As head of the F.O. Reading confessed reluctantly that

> it is difficult for the Council to abandon the principle that disputes may only be settled by peaceful means, and it would seem difficult for the signatories of the Pact of Paris to look on while Japan ignores Article II of that instrument.

The problem was, as he said, "whether anything can be done in the meanwhile to save the Council from being faced with a deadlock."[43] The instructions that he gave Lindley and Lampson were to pacify both the Chinese and Japanese Governments,[44] and to take a similar course of action as their French colleagues.[45] Apart from this, Reading enquired of the governments at Washington, Berlin, Rome, Paris and Madrid

through diplomatic channels whether they would take similar action.[46] The answers to his enquiry were positive.[47]

In mid-October, at Geneva some delegates including Cecil discussed methods of pressure (for example, withdrawal of diplomatic representatives and economic sanctions), which might be used by the Council if the Japanese should finally refuse to evacuate Manchuria. When he heard about this, Reading was agitated and begged Cecil "to take no further action of that kind."[48] However, he thought that the problem was "a tougher nut to crack" than he had anticipated,[49] and something must be done. He wrote to Van.:

> A failure by the League to find some way round the difficulty would be nothing short of a calamity at the present juncture and might imperil any hopes we may have of making progress towards a solution in the more immediate field of Europe in which we are so much concerned.
>
> There is no question but that we cannot now delay any longer and that the affair must be brought to a head.[50]

But HOW?

The Council adopted a Resolution on October 24 that reaffirmed the resolution of September 30 which had fixed November 16 as the date of Japanese withdrawal.[51] Drummond believed that Japan would withdrew her troops soon.[52] Japan, instead, extended her military operation in Manchuria, and this made the deadlock more serious.

The crucial point was, as Mr. Mackillop, member of the Far Eastern Department, said, "whether the *first* step to be taken is the evacuation of the territory, occupied outside the treaty zone (the Chinese thesis) or whether normal conditions should be re-established, or be on the way to re-establishment, before evacuation takes place." He proposed to advise the Chinese to negotiate with the Japanese at once.[53] Lindley's proposal was that the League should "send a commission to Manchuria in order to arrange and supervise the evacuation of the Japanese troops and, at the same time, call upon the Chinese Government to enter into negotiation with the Japanese without waiting for the evacuation to begin."[54]

Both Orde and Pratt thought that Japan considered her position in Manchuria more important than her relations with the League. The former did not believe that by

the deadline the Japanese would carry out the Council's resolution. He advised that, if so, the alternative outcomes would be:

> (1) Action leading up to sanctions under Article 16 of the covenant.
> (2) A confession of helplessness, and
> (3) A compromise which can take various forms: negotiations between China and Japan before complete evacuation; the same with neutral assistance; an International Conference on Manchuria; and perhaps others.
>
> The conclusion seems to be that we should work for an ultimate compromise or at least do nothing to prejudice the chances of arriving at one.[55]

Finally, Reading formulated the proposal on October 29 for the League,

> if Japanese and Chinese representatives could be got together to discuss evacuation as foreseen in Council resolution, [the] two Governments might be advised ...to begin discussion of the point regarding treaty rights. Japan might then be able to effect and excuse complete evacuation by telling her people that she had secured the point about direct negotiation on treaty rights and thus save her face.
>
> I would not minimise the difficulty of ultimately finding a solution of this point, but if in the meanwhile evacuation could be secured, a great deal would have been done.[56]

On November 9, Sir John Simon took his seat at the F.O. succeeding Reading. The immediate problem he faced was that there was little hope of the Japanese withdrawing their troops by the deadline. Like his colleagues, he believed at that moment that the Japanese "had no territorial designs," but vital political and economic interests in Manchuria. He told his colleagues that one of the causes of the dispute was that the Chinese had not recognised the Japanese interests in Manchuria, but at Geneva the Japanese delegate "had not put his country's case very well." The Council's decision to make November 16 the deadline was "a serious step", because "the League had no means to make the resolution effective." In addition, if the Chinese shifted their appeal from Art. 11 to Art. 16, sanctions of various kinds such as restrictions on trade, the withdrawal of the Ambassador and despatch of an international force to Manchuria might be suggested, none of which, in his opinion, was practicable. Based on his suggestion, the Ministers agreed on a line that the British delegates should pursue: "the League of Nations should be upheld," but "Article XVI of the Covenant was not suitable and could not in practice be applied in

the present case." They instructed Simon that he must try every effort to stop the Chinese from shifting the appeal to Art. 16. As to Japan, Simon should continue to persuade her to withdraw her troops before negotiations took place or arrange for discussions on the Treaty situation together with the question of troop withdrawal. In brief, the British policy "should be one of conciliation, with an avoidance of implied threats."[57]

The Council meeting of November did not please Simon at all. A series of private meetings "led to nothing" but undermined "the moral authority of the League".[58] He realised that before she established her dominate position in Manchuria Japan would not agree to withdraw any of her troops.[59] Cecil suggested in a private meeting that the Council should not be excessively accommodating to Japan and that "no pressure would be put upon China to accept what in effect the Council had always condemned as being unjustifiable."[60] But Simon was inclined to give up rather than to check the Japanese, as he wrote to MacDonald,

> the League cannot as a League confirm the continuance of Japanese troops on Chinese territory and regrets that it is not possible owing to Japanese opposition to reach a unanimous and effective conclusion. This is not satisfactory but if all efforts at adjournment fail it is better than pretending (what nobody believes) that the League is really in a position to control the situation.[61]

As soon as he came back to London, Simon prepared a memo for the Cabinet meeting of November 25, in which he reported that the League had proposed to appoint a Commission of Enquiry, which could not report until it had finished its investigation in eight or nine months. Meanwhile, "there was no assurance that the Japanese would evacuate the territory." The Council, therefore, "would have failed in its immediate objective of putting an end to the Japanese occupation of Chinese territory, and would have to look on while its own summons was ignored. It would have to realise that it had failed to enforce the fundamental principle that a State might not, without prior recourse to the recognised means of peaceful settlement, take the law into its own hands." He consulted his colleagues as to whether the British delegate should take the lead:

> Here we have got to weigh the disadvantages against each other. On the one hand the immediate disadvantage to ourselves in losing favour with Japan; and on the other hand the general risk, in which we share, is that the League, in refusing to reaffirm its true function, will lose so

> much respect as may yet be accorded to it in the face of its failure to enforce its demands upon the parties.

He suggested that "the Council could do no more than it did on October 24th, namely, to reaffirm its resolution of September 30th" and "place again on formal record its views as to the obligations of both parties." This, however, "would be a confession of complete failure, not veiled in by the despatch of a Commission of Enquiry to the Far East," but he disapproved of the application of Article 15 on the grounds that it introduced a more menacing atmosphere. He thought that it was necessary to "give a respite of six to nine months during which passions may cool."

After a short discussion, Thomas, the Dominions Secretary, asked him to pay attention to the attitude of the Dominions and then the Ministers came to a conclusion,[62] which was immediately communicated to Cecil:

> Cabinet is opposed to British Representative taking up a special and separate attitude in public session on the ground that it would not be effective and would only cause further heartburnings.[63]

Around the end of the first phase, it was not merely Simon who did not know what steps to take next; nor did the other staff in the F.O. Wellesley told his colleagues, "I feel very certain that no permanent solution of the problem is to be found on a purely juridical basis."[64] From the League, Drummond, who had had a discussion with Simon, thought that since Britain was not prepared to impose any sanctions against Japan, there was "a very severe limitation" on what the League could do.[65] Cecil even told Simon of his anxiety that a possible Chinese declaration of war on Japan would put Britain into "an extremely difficult and dangerous position", and he suggested that at the moment "it would seem best to hold our hands", with which Simon wholeheartedly agreed.[66]

Orde summed up the situation as follows,

> It is hard to see what further action can be taken... For the rest, it would seem that all we can do is to await the report of the Commission of Enquiry.[67]

2. Anglo-American Cooperation

British policy-making got entangled with the issue of Anglo-American cooperation from the very beginning. Since the Japanese invasion of China violated the Covenant as well as the Nine-Power Treaty and the Kellogg Pact, the Chinese

appealed to Washington when they put their case before the League. It was believed that cooperation between Britain and America was essential to a solution of the Far Eastern crisis. Both British and American statesmen emphasised the importance of it during the crisis but criticised each other afterwards for failure to cooperate.

Soon after the incident of September 18, Pratt suggested a possible basis for Anglo-American cooperation:

> America was willing to co-operate with the League because the kind of action which she could take under Article 2 of the Pact of Paris was similar to that which the League could take under Article 11 of the covenant.... This however would cease to the case immediately the League contemplated sanctions -- either economic or military... America could never in any circumstances contemplate using other methods than those of moral suasion and the force of public opinion.
>
> it is neither possible nor desirable for the League to attempt to proceed to apply sanctions against Japan... co-operation of America with the League should be sought on the basis of the Pact of Paris and Article XI of the Covenant and that any proposal to move away from Article XI and apply the sanctions of Article XVI will be rejected by His Majesty's Government.[68]

On the American side, early in October 1931 Stimson, Secretary of State, suggested to President Hoover two alternative courses America could pursue: one was for "some form of collective economic sanctions against Japan", the other was to try diplomatic pressure and the power of world public opinion. Hoover approved of the second but rejected the first because of the risk of war it would lead to.[69] He spoke to the Cabinet, "we will not go along on war or any of sanctions either economic or military for those are the roads to war."[70]

The American statesmen had some arguments to justify their Far Eastern policy: as a single non-member of the League, the United States would meet with a lot of difficulty in imposing sanctions on Japan because, unlike the Covenant of the League, both treaties -- the Nine Power Treaty and the Kellogg Pact -- included no executive body which could carry out sanctions. The American general line was, as Stimson said, "the League had already taken jurisdiction," America's "most useful function would be to furnish independent support to the League rather than to play a role of leadership. ...We must make it clear from the beginning that our ultimate action must always be the result of our own independent judgement."[71]

The Americans differed from the British policy-makers in the fact that Stimson did not consider a Japanese-American relationship more important than that between America and China, and preferred not to appease the Japanese by ignoring the Pact of Paris and the Nine Power Treaty.[72] On September 22, Reading requested Lindsay in Washington to give details about the American reaction to the Manchurian crisis. The answer came back that the American Government "had already twice urged moderation" on both conflicting sides.[73] In view of the Japanese bombing of Chinchow, Stimson delivered the note to the Governments of both disputants on October 10, followed by a strong-worded memo to the Japanese Government only on the 11th.[74]

Moreover, Stimson took the initiative in despatching a direct message to the Secretary-General of the League on October 9 to show the American desire for collaboration.[75] This message drew so much attention at the Council meeting that on October 15 all members of the Council except Japan voted for the proposal to invite the American delegate to the Council meeting.[76] This participation of the American representative in meetings meant that a pattern had been set up for cooperation between the United States, Britain and the League.

But it was too optimistic to imagine that there would be no problem in their cooperation. Stimson told Lindsay his two-fold difficulty, namely, "the tendency in America to revolt against too close cooperation with League of Nations and fear of exasperating sentiment in Japan between whom and the United States feeling is never too cordial." Therefore, he had to be able to represent at home that his cooperation was not so much with the League.[77]

For Britain, the most troublesome and sensitive question was sanctions. Simon was even afraid of mentioning the subject openly. On November 10, he instructed Lindsay,

> We have no thought of sanctions ourselves, but I shall be glad if you can find means without raising any alarm of ascertaining feeling of United States Government as regards their use by United States or by others.[78]

But Lindsay answered, the "subject of sanctions has never arisen in my conversation at State Department,"[79] and he tried to elicit the American Under Secretary's view as to sanctions in general but he found the latter "was completely non-committal."[80]

On the American side, in spite of excluding sanctions, a series of diplomatic activities had taken place to support the League. On November 5, the American Government delivered a note to the Japanese Government, reinforcing the position taken by the League.[81] Stimson instructed Forbe, the American Ambassador in Tokyo,

> I do not intend to remain inactive and aloof, leaving to the others the whole burden of action. The implication of silence on the part of the United States would be that we were taking sides with Japan...

He even warned the Japanese Ambassador on November 19 that he would publish all the documents on the Manchurian crisis between Japan and the United States, which would embarrass the Japanese Government.[82]

While the British policy-makers did not know what to do next, Stimson issued his famous Note of January 7, 1932, in which he declared that the United Sates could not admit "the legality of any situation *de facto;*" that she did not intend to recognise any treaty or agreement between China and Japan which might impair the United States treaty rights, including those relating to Chinese sovereignty and the open-door policy; and that she did not intend to recognise any situation, treaty, or agreement brought about contrary to the Kellogg Pact.[83]

Before despatching the Note, he informed Lindsay that he had strong hopes that the British Government would take similar action.[84] But when the French Ambassador in London asked Wellesley for the British attitude towards the American Note, Wellesley told him that this action was "premature" and might cause "considerable irritation quite unnecessarily". Mr. Orde took a similar view.[85] As for Simon, the only thing that he was concerned about was how to give a satisfactory answer in the House and how to deal with the American request.[86] Following this line, Wellesley prepared information to the Press, which was published three days later and it reads:

> Since... the Japanese representative at the Council... stated on October 13th that Japan was the champion in Manchuria of the principle of equal opportunity and the "open door" for the economic activities of all nations. ...
>
> In view of this statement H. M. G. have not considered it necessary to address any formal note to the Japanese Government on the lines of the American Government's note, but the Japanese Ambassador has been

> requested to obtain confirmation of this assurance from his government.[87]

The Americans could not veil their disappointment when they learned of Britain's reaction.[88] The Japanese responded to the Note with an "ironical tone",[89] and they, at the same time, "highly appreciated friendly attitude of His Majesty's Government" that Britain had not followed the example of the United States in addressing a formal note to Japan.[90]

IV. THE SECOND PHASE OF THE CRISIS: January - September 1932

1. The Shanghai Incident

1) British Policy-making

During the first three weeks of January, the situation in Shanghai became very tense. On the 18th, five Japanese were injured in a local clash between some Chinese and Japanese. Although the Mayor of Shanghai had accepted all demands by Japanese Consul-General, who regarded the reply as satisfactory, Japanese forces suddenly attacked Chapei without any warning on the night of the 28th, which brought the Far Eastern crisis to another climax. On the 29th, China evoked Art. 10 and Art. 15 of the Covenant.

The Shanghai incident drew much attention in Britain. There was controversy between the newspapers: one side held the view that if, at the beginning, greater understanding had been given to the Japanese, and a more flexible attitude adopted, a hopeful result might have been obtained. While the other side, represented by the *Manchester Guardian*, insisted that if "firm action" had been taken against Japan at the outset, the crisis might have been successfully resolved. Its editorial comment on February 1, 1932 says:

> it was of vital importance to this country that we should not connive at Japanese aggression, for peace is the first object of British policy abroad, and the League of Nations, acting through the Covenant, is the only instrument through which we can hope to make a peace policy effective. It was for their apparent inability to realise the importance of the dispute from this point of view, in its early stages, that Sir John Simon and the representatives of the other Powers on the League of Nations Council were chiefly to blame. Had they then made it clear that they intended, come what might, to stand by the Covenant it is probable that the dispute could have been settled quietly by diplomatic means.[91]

In the House, some MPs such as Mr Mander and Mr Cocks were persistent in urging the Government, following the American example, to send a Note to China and Japan. However, the question was cleverly evaded by the Government.[92] The policy-makers did not at all want to put any pressure on the aggressor. Two days before the Japanese attacked Shanghai, turning a cold shoulder to the American application for joint action,[93] the F. O. was busy finding a way of cooperating with Japan without rebuffing America. Pratt suggested that Britain should point out to the United States that they could not stop Japan from acting in a similar way to the way they did in 1927, and what the Western Powers could do was to press the Chinese to meet Japanese demands with regard to suppression of the boycott. Orde, however, wanted to tell the Chinese that they "ought not to subsidise the anti-Japanese societies."[94]

It was the incident of January 28 that caused a certain psychological change in the F.O. because Britain had much more interest in Shanghai than in Manchuria. Simon said, "the first step taken by Japan in Shanghai ought to be called a wrong step."[95] Orde drew his colleagues' attention to the fact that "Japanese action in all its violence cannot be justified."[96] Pratt was in accord and he even went further by agreeing that the Chinese boycott, which he had condemned before, was the only weapon that China possessed which was "the natural and inevitable reaction to Japan's forcible action in Manchuria." He warned his colleagues in his memoranda dated January 31 and February 1:

> unless we were prepared to withdraw altogether from the Far East it might be difficult to escape eventually being drawn into war. ... if we try to avoid this fatal path by protesting and doing nothing more the consequences may yet be much the same.
>
> There is of course the possibility of the economic collapse of Japan under the combined effect of the Chinese boycott and the Anglo-American severance of relations. ... but it must remain a matter for speculation whether the collapse would be so immediate or so complete as to avert the dangers referred to above.[97]

These memoranda won the general agreement in the F. O. Van. agreed with Pratt's estimate of the danger that if Japan continued unchecked, the British position and its vast interests in the Far East would "never recover". However, he did not

think that there was anything they were able to do to check Japan and protect British interest unless "the United States were eventually prepared to use force", which was not impossible because America might be pulled in by Japan as she was by Germany in the First World War. But before that moment came, Britain "must eventually swallow any and every humiliation in the Far East." Therefore he strongly recommended to Simon:

> We can have no longrange, or even shortrange, policy in the Far East. We must live from hand to mouth -- an humiliating process -- unless we have made up, or cleared, our minds upon the answer (i.e. the U.S. has been pulled in -- the Author).[98]

Wellesley was also in accord with Pratt, but he attempted to find an argument to support this shape of policy:

> the success of our Far Eastern policy and the prosperity of our economic interests are largely dependent on Japanese good will.
>
> If, however, the present position succeeds in recovering some degree of equilibrium, without ourselves being compelled by unforeseen circumstances to assume a very definite attitude for or against Japan, we may regard what has happened with comparative equanimity.

But he did not forget to warn his superiors in rank of the seriousness that the crisis would lead to:

> the development of this very dangerous situation may force our hand. ... we may be dragged by events along a path which may end in war with her.
>
> But I maintain that from a material point of view we have nothing to gain and much to lose by antagonising Japan; and to associate ourselves in pressure from America would definitely have this effect. ... which might well prove disastrous to our interest in the Far East.
>
> The danger, as I see it, lies in a definite Anglo-American anti-Japanese attitude... [99]

His memo as well as Pratt's was recommended to the Cabinet for consideration.[100]

In fact, the top British leaders were hesitating to take any decision at that moment because Lindley from Tokyo warned on February 3:

> The position is now so delicate that a single false step may precipitate catastrophe. I trust therefore that no further action be taken at Geneva or elsewhere...[101]

The telegrams which the Ambassador sent to Simon certainly discouraged the F. O. from contemplating any strong measures.[102] He even went further by wishing to disregard China as an ordinary member of the League and blame the League for its ignorance of his warning.[103]

Naturally, his point of view met with bitter criticism from Lord Cecil. This British Delegate in Geneva perceived that although the League had done everything to "save Japanese susceptibilities", "they tried one thing and then another to see how far they could go and when they found that in fact there was no strong disposition to stop them they went further and further." He also warned Simon seriously:

> If we do not take a vigorous line I am confident that the Japanese will establish themselves as the dominating power in China, and through China in the whole of Asia, with consequences to British interests, the League and world peace which may be of most extreme seriousness.
>
> the Government must take a definite decision now on the policy which they are going to pursue. If they adopt Sir Francis Lindley's advice their only useful course is to cease trying to restrain the Japanese in any way and let them do exactly as they like. ... If, on the other hand, they think it desirable to make a real effort to save China, then I think they must make it perfectly clear that that is their intention to the Japanese, and take economic action, with all its consequences, to coerce the Japanese.[104]

He sent Simon his proposal for sanctions including withdrawal of all diplomatic representatives in Tokyo and blocking all exports from Japan. But when Simon consulted Wellesley and Van., neither of them wanted to adopt any coercive measures. Van. said, "the less we hear of economic blockades and Art 16 just now, the better." He had no doubt that Simon was in accord with him.[105]

In fact, Simon, like most of the staff in the F.O., was now very clear that Japan was pursuing "an ambitious plan" just as she had been in Manchuria. What particularly disturbed him was the problem of cooperation with the United States. He told MacDonald and other Cabinet members that if Britain did not act with America, the latter would be rebuffed, but if she did, America would leave Britain with "the brunt of the work and of the blame." "But we cannot afford to upset the United States of America over this," he explained, adding "I do not mean to do so." His estimate of the situation was as pessimistic as Van.'s and Pratt's:

> We are in grave danger of falling between two stools -- offending Japan without completely satisfying America.

I am afraid that I am not hopeful that we can restrain Japan.[106]

During this period, MacDonald frequently discussed the emergency situation with Baldwin, Simon, and the Ministers at the head of the three Service Departments, all of whom later made up the Far Eastern Committee with another three Cabinet members under the leadership of the Prime Minister.[107] It was evident that in Cabinet Pratt and Wellesley's proposals as well as Lindley's warning were taken seriously but Cecil's suggestion was not welcomed.[108]

On February 17, a Cabinet meeting relating to Shanghai affairs was held at 10 Downing Street. The key topic was the problem that the United States requested British to take joint action in invoking the Nine Power Treaty. In addition, Simon drew attention to the point that since it was impossible for Britain alone to assume the burden of Japanese resentment he wanted to show Japan that the appeal of February 16 from the League was not minatory in intention. The appeal reads,

> British Government are wholly opposed to the Council pronouncing judgement in a matter which is not completely before them... It is contrary to the first principles of jurisprudence that judgement should be pronounced before the case of the parties has been fully heard. Japan has not yet delivered a statement of her case...

Apart from this, he consulted his colleagues as to how to answer Mr Mander's question in the House regarding the Government's attitude to the application of Art 16. He suggested hinting that the Government "had no intention of resorting to sanctions."

In the course of discussion, the Cabinet instructed Samuel, the Home Secretary, to "do his best to induce Mr Mander to withdraw" his question. If this failed, Simon's reply "should not be limited to a negative response but should explain that the question had been referred to the Assembly, that neither side had yet put in its case; and that any action pre-judging the issue was to be deprecated."[109]

Meanwhile, the situation at Shanghai seemed to offer Britain an opportunity to shape her policy because the stubborn resistance of the Chinese forces marked "the beginning of a new era in the Far East" according to Pratt.[110] He intelligently analysed in his memo dated February 21 that if Japan controlled Shanghai with a quick and easy victory as she had done in Manchuria, it might well prove difficult for

British enterprise in China. If the Chinese were successful in their defiance of Japan, all other foreign privileges would be swept away. But the present fighting would lead to a consequence that the Japanese would win with difficulty, which would avert both dangers above. He concluded:

> It is then that the opportunity may occur for the League, under British leadership, to help Japan out of her difficulties and help to build up a new and more stable system of international relationships in the Far East. In order to be ready to play our part when the time comes it seems necessary that we should avoid any definite breach between ourselves and Japan while at the same time we keep up our wicket and refuse to allow our rights or our established position to go by default.

His view was generally shared by Orde, Wellesley and Van.[111]

When he received this memo in Geneva, Simon found that both the Chinese and Japanese were in the mood to welcome intervention. He reported to the Cabinet that Britain had taken the chance and put forward her plan for the re-establishment of peaceful conditions in Shanghai. This "silenced the critics", who complained that Britain was either "working behind the back of the League", or failing to show herself "as vigorous as the United States" were prepared to be. Considering that a suspension of hostilities in Shanghai might be arranged, he had appointed Lampson to Shanghai, whom he thought was "the best man" to deal with the possible negotiations.[112]

At the end of February, Britain, France, Italy as well as the United States agreed on a joint offer of good offices to end hostilities and the setting up of a conference in Shanghai.[113] As a result, with the intervention of the Western Powers, Sino-Japanese negotiations started on February 28.

2) Anglo-American Cooperation

A few days before the outbreak of the Shanghai incident, Stimson sent for Lindsay and told him that he was contemplating supporting the Chinese in some way because if the Japanese conquered China it would mean disaster for the trade of other powers, especially of Britain and the United States. He suggested (1) a formal and strongly worded intimation to Japan that nothing could justify the entry of any Japanese forces into the International Settlement (2) reinforcing Anglo-American military forces in Shanghai. He told Lindsay that he was very anxious to have the cooperation of the British Government in both these contemplated measures.[114] But

when his proposal was discussed at the F. O. it was immediately ridiculed. Pratt, Orde and Wellesley wrote down their agreed minutes:

> The picture which Mr. Stimson has in his mind of the situation in Shanghai is almost entirely an imaginary one, and he has done his utmost to rush us into hasty and ill considered action which would have gravely aggravated the situation in the Far East and would have produced consequences disastrous not only to China and Japan but to local British and American interests as well.[115]

Simon instructed the British Ambassador in Washington to inform Stimson of the British proposal: Britain and the United States should press the Chinese Government into suppressing "mob violence" and restraining "boycott activities" on one hand, and remind the Japanese of "the vast concentration of foreign interests in Shanghai and the Yangtsee valley" on the other.[116] A sudden attack by the Japanese on Shanghai had Simon running around in circles: he instructed Lindley to ask the Japanese Government why Chapei was attacked after the Chinese acceptance of Japanese demands and to state that the British Government could not agree to the International Settlement being used as a military base;[117] on the other hand, he urged Lindsay to ask the American Government if they would take similar action and informed them that Britain had sent the gun cruiser "Kent" to Shanghai as reinforcement acting upon the second point in Stimson's suggestion.[118] On top of this, he had to explain to the Cabinet why, according to *The Times*, there had been a delay in communicating with America.[119]

On the American side, Stimson declared that the United States could not act under Art 15 as a member of the League but she would collaborate with the members of the League concerned under the Nine Power Treaty and the Kellogg Treaty.[120]

On January 30, he took the initiative to telephone MacDonald and convey the suggestion by Hoover for a direct appeal to the Japanese Emperor from the American President and the King of the United Kingdom for a cessation of hostilities and the beginning of negotiations for a settlement. He told MacDonald, "it would have a good deal of force. We would endeavor to put the appeal in such shape that it would be difficult for them to refuse." He stressed that the United States would not do it unless Britain could join. This suggestion was "a very sudden proposal" to MacDonald and took him "unprepared". However, he agreed to consider it.[121]

Nevertheless, the F. O. had a quite different idea about the appeal. They thought that the situation had materially changed since that telephone conversation and the appeal should concentrate on Shanghai and exclude Manchuria.[122] The next day, MacDonald answered Stimson by telephone that the British appeal could be sent only by the Prime Minister to the Japanese Prime Minister.[123] In view of this, Stimson decided "the project should be postponed."[124]

On the 31st, the Japanese, due to an unexpected counter-attack by the Chinese army, turned to the Western Powers to use their good offices.[125] Stimson put forward his five-point proposal for a cessation to the conflict, which was generally agreed by Britain, France and Italy.[126] On February 2, the Four Powers despatched the proposal to the Japanese Government.[127] But Japan refused it on the grounds that although the first four were acceptable, the fifth, which connected the Shanghai affair with Manchurian crisis, was unacceptable.[128]

On the British side, Lindley thought, "acceptance of four points would be most valuable in any case."[129] Simon even said, "If we can get any practical results on one, two, three or four it will be a very good thing."[130] Two days later he discussed with Atherton, the American Charge d' Affaires in Great Britain, a new proposal by Britain, which omitted Manchuria from any forthcoming representation to Tokyo in order to continue the good offices.[131] But Stimson did not want to give up the fifth point because in his opinion it was essential that there should be a complete cessation of hostilities in China.[132] He frankly told Simon of his disagreement to the British proposal by telephone and then said, "I don't think it is dignified to go on negotiating with Japan after she has refused the essence of our proposal."[133]

On February 9, Stimson sent for Lindsay and told him that he was contemplating an invocation of the Nine Power Treaty for making a statement about this attack on Chinese sovereignty and independence. He hoped that British Government would take joint action.[134] Two days later, in a telephone conversation with Simon at Geneva, he was told, "you will find,... that the British Government will be glad to stand side by side with you. Our interests are essentially the same." But first of all, Simon had to consult London.[135] In fact, neither he, nor Van. thought that the moment was ripe and that time should be allowed to see whether Lampson could achieve anything at Shanghai.[136]

In the following days, there were several phone calls between Stimson and Simon. The difference between the two sides became more and more obvious. On the 15th, stressing that Britain was a member of the League, Simon was inclined to try dealing with the problem in connection with the League and preferred to separate the Shanghai affair from the Manchurian crisis, while Stimson emphasised the importance of joint action by Britain and the United States and of the fifth point. He persuaded Simon that Britain could join in two separate actions taken by both Nine Power Treaty signatories and the League at the same time. Simon seemed quite inclined to follow this argument but he said he had to consult his colleagues first.[137]

Immediately after that, a meeting was held to discuss the measure in MacDonald's Nursing Home attended by MacDonald, Simon, Chamberlain, Thomas, Lord Hailsham (War Minister) and Sir Eyres-Monsell (Admiralty). The conclusion was

> the best course would be for the Council of the League to make some measured appeal to Japan, on lines similar to those proposed by Mr Stimson, and to make an effort to synchronise the two.

As a result of the meeting a message was sent to Geneva suggesting the lines of an appeal to Japan by the League.[138]

But "to make an effort to synchronise the two" was conditional according to Atherton's understanding: if the United States got "all the signatories of the Nine Power Treaty to agree to the draft of the Nine Power proclamation", Britain would join in, otherwise she would "content herself with participation in the League appeal" and leave the Americans to take independent action on the Nine Power Treaty.[139]

In the evening, Simon telephoned Stimson and turned down the latter's proposal by saying, "I am not decided whether we can actually join in you on the same piece of paper or not".[140] On the 16th, Van. submitted to Atherton a memo which states, "It is thoroughly understood that the question whether other Powers could join in the American document is still in suspense."[141]

When Atherton told Stimson about Britain's decision to not go ahead by telephone, the latter could not help saying, "She has let us down."[142] Since the American Government feared acting alone, Stimson instructed Atherton to inform the F. O. that "there may be no American note."[143]

Late in February, the Japanese gave a very strong hint that "they wished that they were well out of the Shanghai affair."[144] Simon felt it was time for successful

intervention. With a new proposal for extension of good offices, he asked Wilson, the American delegate at Geneva, whether the United States could join the negotiation following cessation of Chinese-Japanese hostilities at Shanghai.[145] Being discouraged by his earlier experience, Stimson instructed Wilson to cooperate but at the same time "to go a little slow."[146]

2. A Policy of Caution during the Waiting Period

Negotiations between the Chinese and Japanese led to the Armistice Agreement on May 5, which gradually relieved the tense situation at Shanghai. Meanwhile, the Japanese created their puppet state "Manchukuo", and there was a continuance of the deadlock on the Manchurian crisis. The period from March to September could be called a waiting period for the Report from the Lytton Commission, which was sent to China for investigation by the League.

In order to avert the risk of invoking Art 16, the Far Eastern Department prepared a memo for the Cabinet Committee. On March 8, the F. O. officials suggested two alternatives: "either to put pressure on Japan, which seemed both useless and dangerous," or to adopt the argument that the questions with which "the Conference was to deal must be investigated by the Lytton Commission." So the outcome would be:

> A decision to await a report by the Lytton Commission should, therefore, have the effect of preventing the Assembly from proceeding immediately to draw up a report under Article 15, paragraph 4, and this should render it more difficult for an attempt to be made to press for the immediate application of Article 16.

Orde emphasised in the minute, "No further action is required on the memo", "sanctions are out of the question..."[147]

On the same day, the Far Eastern Committee instructed Simon to limit any Resolution by the League "to a reaffirmation of the principles of the Covenant" and he should avoid aggravation of Japan and should not go beyond some such expression as "strong regrets".[148]

The next day, the conclusions of the Far Eastern Committee were considered by the Ministers. It was generally recognised that the prestige of the League had been greatly damaged by the Shanghai incident. It would only make things worse if sanctions were applied because the League could not make it effective without joint

action from America. A report by the Chiefs of Staff was circulated at the meeting showing that the application of sanctions would lead to "even graver developments in the Far East." The Cabinet agreed that the strongest weapon which the League could bring to bear", was the mobilisation of world opinion in addition to a reaffirmation of the principles of the Covenant. They instructed Simon to avoid adopting an attitude of condemnation towards either of the disputants.[149]

Simon followed exactly the same method when he drafted the League Resolution of March 11. He cleverly adopted Stimson's non-recognition as the League principles without directly declaring a violation of the covenant or condemning Japan. The resolution emphasised the continuance of mediatory action under paragraph 3 of Art 15, which therefore satisfied both America and Japan.[150] Pratt considered this as so-far-so good and regarded the Resolution as "a happy conclusion".[151] Until September the British Far Eastern policy could be summed up by Simon's words, "we must await the Lytton Report before doing anything".[152]

In this period of time, both American and British Governments were in complete agreement that anything in the nature of an economic blockade would necessarily entail a war, which was certainly not approved of. Stimson told Simon that the United States recognised that nothing beyond protest could be done.[153]

Early in September, the American Senator, Reed, who was in Stimson's confidence, paid Simon a visit at 10 Downing Street. Simon gained the impression from him that Stimson was not really "so eager for vehement denunciations" as he had been.[154] In fact, awaiting the Lytton Report, Stimson "wanted to avoid appearing either butting in or holding back."[155]

V. THE THIRD PHASE OF THE CRISIS: September 1932 - May 1933

1. The Lytton Report and Policy-making

On the eve of publication of the Lytton Report, Simon requested his subordinates to use the waiting interval for reflection.[156] Based on information from Lindley,[157] Orde suggested that Britain "should not take the lead against Japan" and should use its influence "in favour of a moderate and dignified expression of sorrow rather than a strong reproof or demands" which Japan could not accept. He was afraid that the

League would collapse if Japan left, being followed by Germany and Italy in the future:

> the question seems to be one between preservation of an existing League, with the possibility of its adaptation to realities through the progressive education of its members, and the virtual collapse of the present League, ... the greater risk of chaos will be run by driving Japan out of the League than by retaining her at the cost of some compromise of the principle of the sanctity of treaties.

His suggestion was approved of by other inner members of the F.O. In accordance with it Simon summed up four points as the "immediate policy":

> (1) be faithful to the League and act with the main body if possible
> (2) do not take the lead in an attitude which, while necessarily futile, will antagonise Japan seriously
> (3) be fair to both China and Japan
> (4) work to keep Japan in the League.[158]

When the Lytton Report was published on October 1, public opinion generally made a positive comment on it. Attlee, the Labour leader, remarked that this document would create "a great opportunity to vindicate the authority of the League of Nations". He, however, deprecated that the Foreign Secretary had encouraged the Japanese militarists by saying that "he would not take sides." The Labour Opposition demanded that the Government should make every effort to support the principles of the Covenant. The *Daily Herald* and the *Daily Express* regarded the Report as a judgement against the Japanese, and the former's editorial, under the heading "Guilty!", declared that Japan had been found guilty of a series of aggressive actions.[159] At Geneva, Mr Koo, the Chinese representative, appealed to Cecil that the League should impose some special moral pressure on Japan, such as excluding her from the League or withdrawing Ambassadors. However, the policy-makers shut the door on public opinion. Pratt minuted,

> Moral pressure of the kind advocated by Mr Koo would do infinite harm. It would prevent the growth of those influences in Japan which will eventually take the power out of the hands of the younger hotheads now in control and agree to a reasonable settlement of the dispute with China.

This minute met with general agreement from his colleagues including Van. and Orde.[160]

On October 10, Pratt summarised the main points of the Report and advised that the document

> could easily be taken as a severe condemnation of Japan, but... if one looks to the substance below the surface, the balance of right inclines to her side.
>
> It is a fair deduction from the Report that while both parties are to blame, China's failure to set her house in order is the root cause of the present difficulties ... that no solution is possible until she has made at any rate a genuine start with the task of national reconstruction ... The initiative in short now rests with China.
>
> In these circumstances the policy to be adopted by His Majesty's Government would seem to be ... that an effective beginning should be made with the reconstruction of China and that the two parties should be persuaded to meet in friendly negotiation...
>
> The Lytton Report ... should, however, greatly ease the strain of the present situation, for there will no longer be any excuse for treating Japan as the criminal in the dock, and there can be no question of sanctions or of driving her from the League.

This "admirable review", Simon found, was very helpful in clearing his own mind.[161] After reading it, Orde did not wish to add anything except that he wondered if Japan would accept the solution.[162]

Orde's anxiety was not unwarranted. According to Lindley's observation, the Report would most probably be rejected by Japan on the grounds that it assured that (1) the military operation of Japanese troops on September 18 could not be regarded as self-defence (2) "Manchukuo" could not be considered to have been called into existence by a genuine and spontaneous independent movement.[163] At Geneva, Drummond, Secretary-General of the League, presumed that unless Japan accepted the Report, the Council could do no more than pass the Report on to the Committee of 19 and the Assembly. Then the problem was what the Committee of 19 should propose to the Assembly which would make a report under Art. 15. In these circumstances, he put forward two possible proposals: (1) the Assembly would exhaust its duties under Art. 15 by adopting the Lytton Report, declaring against any recognition of "Manchukuo", and recommending China and Japan to negotiate on the lines indicated in the Report. Then as an additional measure, the Assembly might send the report to the Members of the Nine Power Treaty and the Kellogg Pact; (2)

the Assembly would adopt the Report up to Chapter 8 which described the Manchurian incident. As to Chapters 9 and 10 which referred to principles and to the suggestions for settlement, the Assembly could first consult the Members of the Nine Power Treaty plus the Soviets for the result of their examination, and then it might formulate its final conclusions based on all points of view. He analysed that the first proposal implied that the League had failed to settle the problem. So he preferred the second one because, despite showing the League's weakness, it had certain clear advantages, that for example it would force the Americans and Soviets "to bear their responsibilities," gain time and leave the League "with the last word".[164]

Simon wanted his subordinates to be free to give their opinions on these proposals. Being in accord as usual, Pratt and Orde agreed to an extent with the second one, but drew attention to three difficulties such as the question of recognition of Manchukuo, the impossibility of further delay and difficulty in inviting Soviets. Orde suggested that the Manchukuo Foreign Minister should be sounded as to the possibility of a declaration accepting Chinese sovereignty. While Mr. Carr, Assistant Adviser on League of Nations Affairs, was full in accord with Drummond and did not think those three difficulties were so serious. Wellesley and Van. came to a conclusion as the former minuted:

> We are all agreed on the following points:
> 1. That Sir E. Drummond's second proposal should be taken as the basis for our proposals.
> 2. That Russia should be added to the nine Powers.
> 3. But Mr. Orde's proposal for a further enquiry into the state of feeling in Manchuria would worth supporting if the Japanese can be induced to put it forward.

But Van. did not consider Orde's suggestion workable.[165]

After two revisions considering various opinions from his colleagues, Drummond submitted his final proposal in early November which included the following steps: (1) adoption of the first eight chapters of the Report; (2) declaration of non-recognition of and non-cooperation with Manchukuo; (3) the Powers of the Kellogg Pact and of the Nine Power Treaty including the Soviets should be invited to hold a conference to examine proposals made in chapters 9 and 10 and to endeavour to reach a settlement and inform the Assembly of the result; (4) as soon as the result was known, the Assembly could declare under Art. 15 that in view of the difficulties

experienced by the Chinese Government in its work of reconstruction, which had been increased by the incident of September 18, 1931, the League would take a decision affording China technical assistance.[166]

In late November, the Cabinet twice discussed the policy that Britain should pursue in the League. Simon reported to his colleagues Drummond's proposal which he would take on the grounds that "the League can do nothing directly." But he was afraid that "the United States would much prefer to disclaim responsibility by leaving the League of Nations to grasp the nettle itself."[167] Since the Lytton Report had denied the creation of Manchukuo as the result of "spontaneous action of Manchurian inhabitants", he did not see how the Council could be expected to do other than pronounce a condemnation of Japan, which might lead to the possibility of Japan leaving the League.[168] Racking his brains in scheming, Simon found the opportunity to help both Japan and the League to get rid of the embarrassment. He had noticed that "the Lytton Commission did not recommend the League to do anything in particular." "Most of their recommendations were addressed to China or Japan", which was the point that he might be able to make some use of.[169] He was prepared to "ward off" the conclusions unfavourable to Japan by quoting a certain paragraph in Chapter 9 of the Report which brought out the complexity of the dispute. He promised his colleagues that the British delegate would neither take a lead nor commit Britain never to recognise Manchukuo.[170]

Without much discussion, the Cabinet agreed with Simon's conclusion:

> We ought to act as a loyal member of the League ... the course we take is *pro* League and not *anti* Japan. ... we must strive to be fair to both sides. But we must not involve ourselves in trouble with Japan.

They noticed that the stress was laid on the last sentence.[171]

2. Policy of "A Loyal Member of the League"

In late November and early December, the Council organised a general debate on the Manchurian crisis based on the Lytton Report.[172] Giving a speech on December 7, Simon mentioned nothing about the two important conclusions of the Report concerning the Japanese invasion but drew attention to his two observations: the first was a quotation of a passage from Chapter 9 :

> the issues involved in this conflict are not as simple as they are often represented to be. They are, on the contrary, exceedingly complicated, and only an intimate knowledge of all the facts, as well as of their

> historical background, should entitle anyone to express a definite opinion upon them. This is not a case in which one country has declared war on another country without previously exhausting the opportunities for conciliation provided in the Covenant of the League of Nations. Neither is it a simple case of the violation of the frontier of one country by the armed forces of a neighbouring country, because in Manchuria there are many features without an exact parallel in other parts of the world.

The second was the weak points in the Chinese case such as the existence of an anti-foreign feeling and anti-foreign boycott.[173] He thought that the other speakers neglected these factors[174] and it could not be fairly judged "unless proper emphasis was laid on those passages in the Report which criticised China."[175] What he took from the Report as the resolution was "A mere restoration of the *status quo ante* would be no solution."[176]

After listening to his speech, the Japanese Delegate Matsuoka remarked that "Sir John Simon had said in half an hour, in a few well-chosen phrases, what he -- Mr Matsuoka -- had been trying to say in his bad English for the last ten days."[177] However, the British attitude was not only resented by the Chinese on the grounds that Britain even did not support them on a moral issue, but it was also suspected by other Powers including the United States that Britain had "supported and encouraged the Japanese adventures in Manchuria" because the British selfish interest lay in not offending Japan.[178]

On the 22nd, the Japanese Government informed the Committee of Nineteen that they had rejected the Committee's Resolution of January 18th.[179] In fact, well before that, they had turned down all suggestions for compromise. In order to avoid sanctions and Art. 16, which might be executed by the League, Japan put forward new proposals on January 20th, 1933, aiming to play for time.[180] The situation was so delicate that it seemed beyond Simon's capability to handle.[181]

In these circumstances, Pratt warned on December 23, 1932,

> A false step now, or even the appearance of any hesitation, might arouse the abiding hostility of the Chinese and seriously compromise our position both with the League and in America. The good-will of Japan -- even if we are able to retain it -- would hardly suffice to save our extensive interests in China.

He went on to point out that both Britain and the League had gone to the extreme limit of concession to Japan and had met with "a blank refusal". In doing so, Britain ran a great danger of antagonising China. But now when conciliation had broken down, the British role "must be that of a strong and loyal upholder of League principles."[182] This meant, as he explained in his memo of January 5, that Britain had to join in a League condemnation of Japan and run an equal danger of antagonising Japan. He did not know how to avoid the dilemma but he opposed sacrifice of League principles for the concession on the grounds that:

> It is better that the League should become a League even of European States alone rather than that, in the attempt to become universal, it should become a League to which nobody would think it worth their while to belong.[183]

He suggested,

> If Japan retires from the League dignity will be preserved on both sides...
>
> We shall only be able effectively to head off a demand for the expulsion of Japan by showing that we are prepared to join in a dignified but quite unequivocal condemnation of her actions. ... antagonising Japan in this way and to this extent ... would probably not result in any very great damage to our material interests, whereas if we do not go at least thus far our moral prestige which is the real basis of our position in China would be destroyed... Moreover unless we take the bold and simple course of condemning Japan we shall run the far graver risks of weakening the League and alienating America.[184]

He urged informing the Japanese Government of the possible course of action taken by Britain after the League's judgement had been given and explaining to them the reasons which made that action inevitable. At the same time, the British Government should immediately ask America, France, Italy and Germany to take a similar line.[185]

But not fearing the result of plain speech to Japan, Cadogan pointed out that

> the loss of Japan would be great blow to the League... But it would be far better that she should go than that the League should swallow its pride and its principles to keep her. I don't see why the League should not continue to exist usefully without Japan -- I am not quite sure that a "regionalisation" of the League is not a necessary reform of the future.

He also preferred letting Japan leave to expelling her, but he reminded the F. O. of two possible problems: (1) in that way, Japan was still under the obligations by the

treaty in two years to set everything straight, which he did not believe she would fulfil; (2) it was very difficult to resist a demand to expel Japan.[186]

In the exchange of views between inner members of the F. O., Pratt's proposals met with general agreement. However, Simon and Van., in spite of being generally in accordance with Pratt, thought the weak point in Pratt's proposals was that it would be regarded as taking the lead and urging the other Powers to follow.[187]

Later Simon reported to the Cabinet that Britain would continue not to recognise the existing regime in Manchuria for some time because the League had adopted non-recognition as the principles. But as soon as the moment came -- if Manchukuo really established itself as an independent entity or if "an important foreign Government" i.e. America had recognised Manchukuo -- Britain would at once reconsider revising her own position. He hoped that the Cabinet could consider: (1) rejecting any resort to economic or other sanctions under Art. 16. (2) the use of modified pressure: the members of the League could declare that Japan had broken the rules of the League. The question of an arms embargo could only be considered -- but it was still very difficult to decide upon and must be handled with great caution even -- on the condition that all other countries including America did the same.[188]

At Geneva the Resolution for adoption of the Assembly on February 21, 1933 was under preparation based on the Lytton Report. Eden and Pratt took part in drafting it.[189] Simon instructed Eden to shape the document following the policy above so that it did not prevent Britain from revising her position as a result of her own interests in the future.[190] The resolution included condemnation of Japanese violation of the rules of the League and non-recognition of Manchukuo, which was accepted by the Assembly on the 24th but rejected by Japan.[191]

On the 27th, the British Government declared that Britain was unilaterally placing an arms embargo on both China and Japan on the grounds that "supplies to China alone would only tempt the Japanese navy to capture them." The purpose of the embargo was, as Simon explained, that by showing Britain as a loyal supporter of the League's judgement, Britain was now entitled to enquire what other nations, particularly America, were prepared to do.[192] In fact, the Cabinet had decided beforehand that the embargo would last only a fortnight and even Simon knew clearly that a fortnight was such a short time that it was impossible to regard it as sufficient

either to allow an international agreement to be reached or to check arms export to the disputants.[193]

"This bold lead" was fully understood by Japan,[194] but met with criticism from other quarters, both at home and abroad. In the House, Mr Cock asked Simon why supplies of arms could not be sent to China by other ways than by the sea.[195] Negative comments also came from the other Powers.[196] The American Government thought that to embargo China was worse than doing nothing.[197] On March 14th, the British embargo -- it was believed to favour Japan rather than check her[198] -- was lifted on the grounds that it had not evoked any corresponding action in any other powers.[199]

3. Anglo-American Cooperation

After the publication of the Lytton Report, Stimson told Simon through the American Ambassador Mellon that America's first concern was that the authority of the Nine Power Treaty and Kellogg Pact must be firmly defended. Towards this aim, the United States were prepared to cooperate with other powers concerned, particularly with Britain. He pushed Britain to take a lead since she was a member of the League as well as one of signatories of the Nine Power Treaty.[200] But from Mellon, he learned that the British were "a little too lukewarm to take a vigorous lead" though MacDonald, Simon and Van. seemed more disposed than ever to stand with the Americans.[201]

On the other hand, the British tried to find out how far the Americans were prepared to go with the League. On October 26, Simon invited Davis, American Delegate to the Disarmament Conference, and Atherton to the meeting at the F. O. with Eden, Orde, Pratt, Lytton and himself. When Lytton asked Davis what action under the Nine Power Treaty was contemplated by the United States Government, the latter said that they had not thought out any plan and they wanted the League to handle the matter. They were ready to cooperate with the League and would let it know if they could join after it had made the decision.[202]

Feeling Simon's speech of December 7 "particularly disconcerting", Stimson warned his British partners that any indication of weakness or too conciliatory an attitude by Britain would encourage Japan. Failure to reaffirm the principle of non-recognition would amount to an acknowledgement of Japan's contention that the

Covenant and the treaties presented no real obstacles to Japan's proceeding as she might choose. He went on to point out seriously,

> if the British Government shows itself willing neither as a government nor as a member of the League to take a stand on behalf of principles, and if the League, in consequence, dodges the issues and pretends to believe that a committee or commission of conciliation can, unsupported by a foundation of principles... I cannot but doubt whether any useful purpose would be served by our appointing a representative, if asked so to do, to work with such a commission.[203]

He considered adoption of the Lytton Report and non-recognition as a precondition to American participation in the work of a committee of conciliation.[204] Since he was wholly dissatisfied with the draft resolution of December 16 due to its unprincipled character, Stimson instructed Wilson,

> you will not help that breaking of the ice by any sign of weakness. Not a bit. Just the reverse.[205]

He wanted Wilson to bear in mind that he must make it very clear he would take a decision of cooperation on the basis of whether the League had acted in the nature of an affirmation of findings of principle, i.e. whether the League Resolution was in accord with American principles.[206]

In mid-January, when the effort made by the League to find a basis for conciliation came to nothing, Simon sought further American support; but his reluctance to mention the next step left Stimson with the impression that there was no change in future British policy. Stimson would rather push the British Government into the line backed up firmly by the non-recognition than go along with Britain and the League and make any unprincipled accommodation to Japan. In his opinion, the League should soon declare the judgement of non-recognition.[207] As to participation in the Advisory Committee for conciliation, the American Government, despite acceptance of the invitation, emphasised that their representative should work in the Committee without a right to vote, which did not commit America to anything.[208]

On March 27, Japan gave preliminary notice of her withdrawal from the League and the Manchurian crisis was settled by leaving it unsettled although later the Sino-Japanese Armistice at Tang Ku was signed on May 31.

VI. AFTERMATH: FAR EASTERN APPEASEMENT AND THE EUROPEAN ISSUE

The Manchurian episode was only the first step of Japanese establishment of "the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere". After the Tang Ku Armistice, a new plot was devised. Ishihara, chief of the operations section of the general staff, made it clear in June 1933:

> War will come when our national policy of establishing an East Asian league is obstructed by an enemy. Whether the enemy be America, Russia or Britain, the war will be a protracted one. We must, therefore, expect to encounter their combined military force as well as China's resistance. The only way to carry out our national defence plan is therefore to establish control over China proper as speedily and skilfully as possible, create a self-sufficient economic bloc encompassing Japan, China and Manchukuo, protect our position in the East Asian league by force against the land force of the Soviet Union and the Naval force of the United States and Britain, and then to devise ways to bring the enemy to his knees, thus opening the way to victory.[209]

This was an exclusive strategy, which would inevitably result in war with the Western Powers.

When Japan had realised that the conflict of interest between herself and the Western Powers was fundamentally unresolvable, British policy-makers tried to draw some lessons from the previous crisis. On November 9, the Committee of Imperial Defence considered the Annual Review by Chiefs of Staff, which listed three major commitments: the Far East, Europe and India, repeating the previous view that the Far East "remains the greatest and most immediate of our commitments". Chamberlain, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, thought "it was a mistake" to give priority to the Far East instead of Europe. This "had gradually poisoned our relations with Japan," he said:

> If it were possible to improve our relations with Japan the whole problem in the Far East would be much simplified, and it even might be possible to reduce the Far East in the order of priority. This was one of the reasons which led him to suggest that it might perhaps be unwise to commit ourselves too definitely to an order of priority.

MacDonald and Simon agreed with the view of the Chiefs of Staff while they also thought Chamberlain's proposal necessary. In the end, the Committee appointed the Defence Requirements Committee, which was composed of Hankey, a secretary of the Cabinet (Chair), Fisher, Permanent Under Secretary at the Treasury, Vansittart and three Chiefs of Staff, to investigate the situation.[210]

The DRC started their first meeting on November 14 and continued to work on their Report in the following months. Meanwhile, the Navy Staff warned them that without a strength of two power standard (a navy large enough to fight Japan in the Far East while leaving in home waters sufficient force to contend with the strongest European power), the Navy could no longer afford war in the Far East and in Europe at the same time.[211] The officials in the F.O. also put forward a number of memoranda to discuss the Far East situation from various angles. Having been circulated in the F.O., this collection of papers was sent to the Cabinet and other departments with Van's covering letter, in which he summed up the conclusion for the basis of future Far Eastern policy:

> (1) It would be inadvisable to tie our Far Eastern policy to either Japan or to the United States, since the former have fundamental aims to which we cannot give support, while the latter are an entirely uncertain factor.
>
> (2) It is a major British interest not to antagonise Japan, and still more not to be made the spear-head of opposition to her arms. ...[212]

Differing from Hankey and the Chiefs of Staff, both of whom stressed Far Eastern danger, Van advised the Cabinet around the beginning of December:

> The order of priorities which put Japan first pre-supposed that Japan would attack us after we had got into difficulties elsewhere. 'Elsewhere' therefore came first, not second; and elsewhere could only mean Europe, and Europe could only mean Germany ... Our resources were not sufficient to meet a menace from both Japan and Germany, and ... of the two Germany was the greater menace.

Fisher shared his view completely and went further to argue that Britain should be prepared to re-establish Anglo-Japanese friendship even at a cost of Anglo-American relations, including preparations for hostilities against America.[213] His pro-Japanese view was supported by his superior, Chamberlain, who told his colleagues that the United States "will give us no understanding to resist by force any action by

Japan."[214] However, the DRC, as a whole did not accept such an extreme view, but they did urge the importance of achieving a *rapprochement* with Japan.[215] In their discussion, the DRC realised that due to the financial situation, it was impossible to maintain a two-power standard Navy. Great Britain was, therefore, not able to fight a two-front war both in the Far East and in Europe at the same time. Their conclusion was that if a détente in Anglo-Japanese relations could be achieved, it would allow the British Navy sufficient force to concentrate on European and Mediterranean waters.[216]

In their first Report of February 28, 1934, DRC advised that

> advantage should be taken of any opportunity to improve our relations with Japan ... We cannot overstate the importance we attach to getting back, not to an alliance (since that would not be practical politics) but at least to our old terms of cordiality and mutual respect with Japan ... there is already some speculation as to the future extent of Japan's relations with Germany.

They observed that while some improvement of Britain's defence in the Far East had to be made *vis-à-vis* Japan, Germany should be designated as "the ultimate potential enemy against whom our 'long range' defence policy has to be decided." In the face of the possibility that Britain might be involved in war simultaneously in the Far East and in Europe, a *détente* with Japan would allow Britain to concentrate on Germany. However, a policy of accommodation with Japan should be backed up by a British reinforced military position in the Far East, "showing a tooth". The Report went further to calculate that the expenditure on three services would be £82 million, of which £71 million was to be spent in the next five years.[217]

On March 14, the Cabinet considered the Report for the first time. Chamberlain "warmly supported" the DRC policy of accommodation with Japan. He hoped to tell Japan that "we had not linked ourselves with America. If this were done Japan would be free from the fear that we might be united with America against her." He went on to suggest that

> there should be a Pact of Non-Aggression with Japan for a term of years. This might have to be subject to certain assurances, for example, as to Japan's attitude on China. If we could get a satisfactory bilateral pact it might have a beneficial effect on our relations which would enable us to concentrate on the serious situation that was developing nearer home.

The Report also obtained ample support from some other Ministers. However, Simon showed some doubt about whether the attempt to restore friendship would be successful due to a number of difficulties such as the issue of Manchukuo, Anglo-American relations and the forthcoming Naval Conference. In particular, he had tried his best to appease Japan during the recent crisis, but in vain. He, however, agreed with Chamberlain's suggestion of a non-aggression pact.

MacDonald held some reservations on this policy because he thought that "it would be regarded in America as an Alliance". But he did not at all oppose the pro-Japanese course as he said that "all were agreed that something would have to be done to improve relations with Japan and get on more confidential terms." Technically, he instructed that "the more quietly we could improve our relations with Japan the better for the present." In the end, the Cabinet asked the F.O. and the Admiralty to give further definition for improving relations with Japan.[218]

According to Cabinet instructions, Simon dictated the first draft of the memo with the help of Orde and then Van revised it extensively before submission. After analysing the "pros and cons" of a pact with Japan, the memo found that "on the whole, the balance seems to incline on the side of the 'cons'" due to various disadvantages such as the record of Japanese violation of the Kellogg Pact, the issue of Manchukuo, the possible negative attitude of America, Russia and China, and in particular, the League of Nations. After discussing it on the 19th, the Cabinet decided that the proposal for a non-aggression pact with Japan should receive further consideration.[219]

On May 2, the Cabinet decided to refer the DRC Report to the Ministerial Committee on Disarmament, which, after some discussion, asked Chamberlain to re-estimate the costs of the whole rearmament programme suggested by the DRC.[220] Despite supporting the Report, the Chancellor was not happy with the expensive programme. Following the view of the DRC, he argued that the expenditure of £67 million suggested by the DRC for shipbuilding was based on one-power standard on the assumption of fighting only against Japan, but not a two-front war both in the Far East and in Europe; since the DRC also concluded that Germany was the ultimate enemy, the logical view should be that Great Britain must prepare for war against her major enemy – Germany – rather than war in the Far East. His conclusion was that if

they made military preparations for confronting the European menace, they must give up any hope of preparing for war against Japan, as he explained in his letter to his sister on July 28,

> if we are to take the necessary measures of defence against her (Germany – Author) we certainly can't afford at the same time to rebuild our battle-fleet. Therefore we ought to be making eyes at Japan.[221]

Late in June, he successfully convinced the Ministerial Committee to decide on a very limited naval programme. The total costs of rearmament for the next five years had been cut by a third.[222] This decision was fatal to the British rearmament in the 1930s and started the process of her military weakness. The DRC policy of restoring a *détente* in Anglo-Japanese relations by a method of "showing a tooth" then became a policy of appeasing the aggressor with no tooth to show.

Early in July, Clive, the new British Ambassador in Toyko, reported that Mr Mirota, the Japanese Foreign Minister, told him that Japan was ready to sign "non-aggression pacts with England and America".[223] The Ambassador's report received intensive consideration both from the F.O. and the Cabinet. Although they agreed to improve Anglo-Japanese relations in principle,[224] a majority of senior members in the F.O. including Van, Orde, Mounsey (an Assistant Under-Secretary) disliked the Japanese idea. Apart from the "cons" that they had explored in their previous proposal,[225] Orde analysed that if, as a result of a pact, the Government were "to encourage Japan to fight Russia, we should see the Russian counterpoise to Germany seriously weakened." Simon, however, showed a great interest in the Japanese approach, and said, "why *not*? ... It may be a valuable buffer against Japanese naval liberty."[226]

Chamberlain (Acting Prime Minister August 8 - September 22, 1934) admired the idea too as he wrote to Simon on September 1: although there were various inconveniences to signing a pact with Japan, they should give priority to British interests:

> it is at least arguable that the Manchukuo affair, except insofar as it served to discredit the League, has not hitherto harmed us and, so long as the open door is maintained, is actually likely to benefit British exporters.

However, he agreed with Simon's suggestion of enquiring what was Japan's idea about a Pact.[227]

At the Cabinet meeting of the 25th, according to Chamberlain's suggestion, the Ministers instructed him and Simon to make a joint questionnaire.[228] On the same day, the Foreign Secretary asked Clive to find out

> What exactly have the Japanese in mind in making this suggestion? ... are the Japanese really so desirous of such a pact that they would be prepared to pay a reasonable price for it? And if so, how much?[229]

Their joint memo of October 16 for the Cabinet embodied most points in Chamberlain's letter of September 1. As for the question of Manchukuo, they looked for a sort of resolution like Munich of 1938:

> The story of Manchukuo ... is largely past history, and the important thing, both for China and for ourselves, is that Japanese aggression and penetration should not pass the Great Wall and invade or monopolise China proper. ... If, indeed, Japan were prepared to enter into a new and specific assurance which would guarantee the integrity of China proper, without prejudice to the position on either side as regards Manchukuo, this might provide in the eyes of China something of real value in a special Anglo-Japanese arrangement which otherwise it would be impossible to justify. While it would be difficult to frame the guarantee in such a way as not to amount to a recognition of Manchukuo and an abandonment of the line hitherto taken by the League of Nations...[230]

However, it was so delicate and so serious that the Cabinet were not able to come to a decision due to divergence within the Government. On October 24, they decided to postpone the consideration of it "until further progress had been made in the Anglo-Japanese Naval discussion."[231] Although the desirability of a non-aggression pact was frustrated because of the breakdown of the London Naval Conference and the Japanese launching of total war on China on July 7, 1937, the policy of accommodation with Japan had remained unchanged well through the period of Europe crises.[232]

VII. COMMENT

The Manchurian crisis was the first fundamental challenge to the Versailles Settlement, the first major test of the League of Nations and the first step taken by the British Government to carry out appeasement during the inter-war period. It was in a broad sense the prologue to the Second World War.

Although there has been considerable study done on this subject, the nature of the British Far Eastern policy has not yet been fully explored. Attention should be drawn to the following arguments: the first one was that the British Far Eastern policy was not appeasement on the grounds that Great Britain "made no 'Munich agreement' in the Far East", buying off an aggressor "at the sacrifice of principle". Their policy was that "Japan somehow had to be accommodated, but at the same time stopped."[233] In the second argument, some historians deny there exists a fundamental relationship between Far Eastern and European crises because they think that the Manchurian crisis did not "cause" Mussolini's conquest of Abyssinia and Hilter's adventures in Europe. The Manchurian episode was "far away", it "did not endanger the peace of Europe."[234] "Clearly there were links between the situation in Europe and that in the Far East", A.J.P. Taylor says and then asks, "but what were they?"[235] These two arguments are in fact related to each other: neglect of appeasement in Far East easily leads to the conclusion that there was no fundamental relationship between Far Eastern crisis and that in Europe. On the other hand, a failure to find the underlying relationship between the two supports the argument of denying Far Eastern appeasement.

The substantial evidence in this chapter has proved that the above arguments are incorrect. During and after the Manchurian crisis, the British Government made every effort to buy off the Japanese aggressor by helping the latter "ward off" the charge of their aggression. Despite being a leading power in the League, they sacrificed the principle of the Covenant by misinterpreting it, namely, they emphasised the complexity and particularity in the Manchurian case as an excuse for not employing the principles and the methods of the League. They attempted to find a way round the conflict between the League and Japan rather than to take a firm stand to defend the Covenant. Pretending to be fair and impartial to both sides, they tried

to argue in favour of the aggressor by implying that China's failure to set her house in order provoked the Japanese invasion. The resolution to the crisis, in their opinion, was not to take any anti-aggressive measure but to "promote conciliation".[236] Instead of stopping Japan, they tried to restore Anglo-Japanese friendship which was, in their view, the only assurance to British interest in the Far East. Baldwin said to Thomas Jones during the Shanghai incident,

> The very people like Bob Cecil ... are now urging us forward to take action. But where will action lead us to? If we withdraw Ambassadors that's only the first step. What's the next? and the next? If you enforce an economic boycott you'll have war declared by Japan and she will seize Singapore and Hongkong and we can't, as we are placed, stop her.[237]

After they revised the DRC policy in May - June 1934, the Ministers completely ruled out defending the Pacific by force and decided to accommodate Japan without setting any limits. Chamberlain and Simon went further to devise a proposal of the Munich-like resolution in the Far East on October 16, 1934, in which they considered that by keeping the *status quo* in Manchuria, they could invite Japan to enter into "a new and specific assurance which would guarantee the integrity of China proper" within the Great Wall.[238]

The British policy-makers did not succeed in selling China physically to Japan as they sold Czechoslovakia to Hitler because the situation did not allow them. Apart from various difficulties that the F.O. had realised, the Japanese, unlike Hitler, seized Manchuria in 1931 and launched a total war on China in 1937 without consulting the Western Powers beforehand. In other words, Japan did not give Britain the necessary time and opportunity to arrange any selling. What they did was similar to Hitler's annexation of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, leaving Britain nothing to sell. On the other hand, China, unlike Czechoslovakia, did not accept any arrangement of selling herself, and she resisted Japanese invasion even with little help from the Western Powers rather than surrender. All this had spoiled their Munich-like proposal in the Far East, but it did not change the nature of Far Eastern appeasement. If British Manchurian policy had not opted for appeasement in its buying off the aggressor at the sacrifice of principle, there would have been no appeasement existing in the 1930s except Munich. For example, although the Hoare-Laval plan proposed selling

Abyssinia to Mussolini, it was after all not carried out. Great Britain did not pay Hitler anything during the Rhineland crisis since the zone belonged to Germany. Despite acquiescence in the face of the Anschluss, the Western Powers did not buy off Hitler by offering Austria physically. After Munich, Hitler seized the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 without consulting the British Government. Following this logic, appeasement would only mean an incident – Munich – rather than a policy which lasted for almost ten years. Certainly, few would agree this. However, the difference between British Manchurian policy and Munich agreement was, if there was any, that the former was a starting point of appeasement and the latter was its climax.

There were various reasons that led Great Britain to the road of appeasement during the Manchurian crisis. Apart from the subjective and objective roots of this policy which have been discussed in the Introduction, the following points were important: firstly, despite discrediting the League, Japanese invasion of Manchuria had not yet jeopardised British interests in the Far East. In order to save British strategic and economic interests in the Far East without any risk of starting a war, the policy-makers thought that the best and perhaps the only way was to reach a settlement with the Japanese by sacrificing the Covenant. Wellesley summarised, "the success of our Far Eastern policy and the prosperity of our economic interests are largely dependent on Japanese good will."

Secondly, concerning the German menace in the future, the British leaders decided to accommodate with Japan in Far East so as to concentrate on Europe because they did not want to spend enough money on rearmament. The result was, as Chamberlain said in 1932, "we are no more in a position financially and economically to engage in a major war in the Far East than we are militarily."[239] The Cabinet accepted that Britain was not able to afford to run even the slightest risk of war since it was impossible to count on her sea-power to defend her own interest in the Far East according to the report by the Chiefs of Staff.[240] However, leaving Japan unchecked in the Far East made it impossible for Great Britain to concentrate on Europe later. Whenever they considered the possibility of taking a firm stand against aggressors in Europe, the appeasers

worried that Japan would strike in the Far East if Britain was involved in war in the Mediterranean and in Europe. This was one of the most fundamental factors to lead to European appeasement.[241]

To summarise the replay to the arguments, the British Far Eastern policy was one hundred per cent appeasement, which, to a great extent, caused European appeasement. The Japanese example in Manchuria not only encouraged Germany and Italy to put into practice their ambitious plans, but also made a Tokyo-Berlin axis possible.[242] Although the Manchurian crisis itself did not "cause" Mussolini and Hitler's invasion, European appeasement led by Far Eastern appeasement offered favourable conditions which, to large extent, caused European aggressors' success as appeasement had contributed to the Japanese success in the Far East.

In policy-making, Sir John Simon was a key person because he was in a position to sum up the proposals of his subordinates and report the conclusion to his colleagues as the basis for shaping policy, which was generally taken by the Cabinet. Hesitation in his personality increased the powerlessness that was characteristic of the British foreign policy of this period. MacDonald's decline both in his political career and in health was coincidentally in accordance with the decline of Great Britain. The impact of the appeasers' personality on policy making was negative and passive.

Public opinion in the early 1930s seemed overall pro-League, and Simon was generally criticised for having "let down the League".[243] However, the public had no way of influencing policy making. The appeasers turned a deaf ear to the voice that advocated taking a firm line against aggression, and they evaded or suppressed the questions, which would embarrass them in the House. Within the Government, they also turned down Cecil's different views. With a great intelligence to deceive the public, they insisted on this powerless policy. As a result, they lost the first chance to stop aggression.

In 1931, the anti-fascist powers were in a favourable position to stop the Japanese aggression. Danger from Germany was still remote and Mussolini probably had not even thought about his adventure in Abyssinia.[244] Had Japan been checked in time, it would have discouraged the other aggressors; and enabled Britain to gain relief from being confronted with a double and even triple danger both in the Far East and Europe later. In fact, according to Lampson's estimate (which even the Japanese

Minister admitted), Japan had lost 38% of her trade due to the Chinese boycott and it might well have brought industrial trouble upon her more quickly than she anticipated.[245] If Britain had taken a vigorous line, it would have been effective even without the imposition of a direct blockade or other military measures.[246] By comparison with the consequences of the Second World War to British interests in the Far East, this risk -- if there was any -- was worth taking. In fact, even without running any risk of war, Japan might have been checked or at least not have won so easily as long as Britain had taken a firm stand against aggression and put moral and diplomatic pressure on Japan. For instance, although it was far from satisfactory, Britain adopted a much more severe line and cooperated a little more closely with America and other Western Powers regarding the Shanghai incident than she had done in the Manchurian crisis. This joint pressure of the Western Powers was one of the reasons that Japanese forces withdrew from Shanghai.

The British policy-makers usually emphasised that Britain could not check Japan unless America used force. Since it was not certain that the Americans would use force, they would not check Japan in any way. Both Britain and the United States were half-hearted towards their collaboration. The British Government were afraid that America would leave them with "the brunt of the work and of the blame", while the latter feared that "we might go along with the British for a certain distance and they would then leave us holding the bag."[247] Neither Britain nor America was prepared to take lead. However, it was Britain, not America who should be blamed more for weakening the Anglo-American cooperation by her hesitation in joining the United States action under the Nine Power Treaty and her too conciliatory and unprincipled attitude towards Japan. Although she did not completely fulfil her treaty obligations, America at least tried to put moral and diplomatic pressure on Japan. In comparison, Britain did her utmost to escape from the responsibility bound by the Covenant and to ingratiate herself with the aggressor.

British Far Eastern policy during the Manchurian crisis was a failure not only because it was not able to check Japan, but also because it aggravated the situation in the Far East: 1) Japan was appeased but not completely satisfied by appeasement which nourished her ambition to such an extent that nothing could satisfy her until she had got whatever she wanted. She formed a source of war in the world, which made

war in the Far East inevitable and world war possible. 2) The British interest in the Far East and the League was not saved either. Failure to settle the Manchurian crisis in accordance with the principles of the Covenant foreshadowed both the collapse of the League and the hopeless future of the Disarmament Conference. British withdrawal from the Far East became almost certain. 3) The failure of Anglo-American cooperation discouraged America so that she showed a more isolated attitude towards the later crises.[248]

All this increased difficulties in organising the struggle against the aggression in the future, and discouraged the appeasers from formulating any vigorous line. From then on, British foreign policy making was based on appeasement, which was not only used to deal with the Japanese, but also with Mussolini and Hitler.

1 Akira Iriye, "Japanese Imperialism and Aggression" in Robertson (ed.) *The Origins of the Second World War*, London 1978, pp.249-250.
2 *The Lytton Report*, p.71.
3 *Documents on International Affairs 1932*, pp.247-248.
4 Jones, T., *A Diary with letters 1931 - 1950*, London 1954, pp.xxvii, xxxi; Templewood, *Nine Troubled Years*, London 1954, pp.27-29; Simon, J., *Retrospect*, London 1952, p. 272; Marquand, D., *Ramsay MacDonald*, London 1977, pp.150; Robbins, K. (ed.) *The Blackwell Biographical Dictionary of British Political Life in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford 1990, p.278.
5 Templewood, p.29; Jones, p.xxxi.
6 Baldwin was Lord President at that time.
7 Thomas Jones was Deputy Secretary of the Cabinet before 1930, then the Secretary of the Pigrim Trust. He had a close relationship with Baldwin and MacDonald.
8 Simon, p.273; Jones, xxxiii, 93; Thorne, *The Limits of Foreign Policy: the West, the League and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931 - 1933*, London 1972, p.92-93.
9 Simon, p.178; Marquand, p.175; DBFP 2nd-XX, N97.
10 Jones, p.xxxi; Templewood, p.27; Robbins, *British Political Life*, p.277.
11 Cecil, Viscount, *All The Way*, London 1949, p.198.
12 Marquand, pp.714-715; Middlemas & Barnes, p. 726.
13 Roberts, B., *Sir John Simon*, London 1938, p.277; Jones, p.193.
14 Simon, p.273.
15 Robbins, *British Political Life*, p.375.
16 Feiling, *The Life of Neville Chamberlain*, London 1946, p.249. Eden also said, "John Simon's brilliant, analytical mind hated to take decisions. As a consequence, he was tempted to dodge them, for which there was always an ingenious reason." " His weakness as Foreign Secretary was that he found it difficult to devise and hold to a policy. His training and his active mind enabled him to see its shortcomings all too clearly, with the result that he was tempted to hedge and trim to meet the objections, until little was left of the original purpose." [Avon, *Facing the Dictators*, London 1962, pp. 28, 219-220.]
17 See Introduction, p. 4 above.
18 *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*, 2nd-VIII, N769.
19 Simon, p.177.
20 Rose, N., *Vansittart: study of a diplomat*, London 1978, p.106.
21 DBFP 2nd-IX, N238 note 2.
22 The memoranda of Wellesley and Pratt were recommended to the Cabinet. [see DBFP 2nd-IX, Nos.216, 239; Cab23/70 14(32).]
23 DBFP 2nd-IX, N216.
24 ibid, N356.
25 ibid, N21.
26 DBFP 2nd-X, N745 note 1; DBFP 2nd-XI, N453 note 8.
27 Thorne, pp.90, 141.
28 Bassett, R., *Democracy and Foreign Policy: the Sino-Japanese Dispute, 1931-33*, London 1952, pp.11-13.
29 Thorne, p.92.
30 ibid, pp. 90, 149; Bassett, pp.11-12.
31 DBFP 2nd-VIII, N593.
32 Thorne, p.149.
33 DBFP 2nd-VIII, N509.
34 ibid, Nos.531, 550.
35 ibid, N569.
36 ibid, N596.
37 ibid, Nos. 522, 603.
38 ibid, N566.
39 ibid, Nos.514, 520.
40 Thorne, p.150.

41 DBFP 2nd-VIII, N685.
42 ibid, N685 note 1.
43 ibid, N689.
44 ibid, Nos. 586, 587.
45 ibid, N560.
46 ibid, Nos. 561, 562.
47 ibid, N561 note 4
48 ibid, N666; Cecil, *A Great Experiment*, London 1941, pp.225-226.
49 DBFP 2nd-VIII, N672 note 3.
50 ibid.
51 *Documents on International Affairs 1932*, pp.251-253.
52 DBFP 2nd-VIII, N573.
53 ibid, N681 note 1.
54 ibid, N624 note 1.
55 ibid, N681 note 3 & N621.
56 ibid, N689.
57 ibid, N769; Cab23/69 75(31); Middlemas & Barnes, p.725.
58 DBFP 2nd-VIII, N746.
59 ibid, Nos.739, 746.
60 ibid, N754.
61 ibid, N746.
62 ibid, N769; Cab23/69 81(31).
63 DBFP 2nd-VIII, N775.
64 DBFP 2nd-IX, N356.
65 DBFP 2nd-VIII, N773.
66 ibid, N754 note 3; N828.
67 DBFP 2nd-IX, N85.
68 DBFP 2nd-VIII, N685.
69 Hoover, *Memoirs 1922-1933*, London 1952, p.366; Wilbur & Hyde, *The Hoover Policies*, New York 1937, p.601.
70 ibid, p.601.
71 Stimson, *The Far Eastern Crisis*, New York 1936, pp.40-41; *Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan 1931-1941*, Vol. I, p.11.
72 Stimson, p.237.
73 DBFP 2nd-VIII, N516.
74 FRUS Japan 1931-41, Vol. I, pp.20-21.
75 ibid, pp.17-18.
76 DBFP 2nd-VIII, N692.
77 ibid, N668.
78 ibid, N717.
79 ibid, N719.
80 ibid, N748.
81 ibid; FRUS Japan 1931-41, Vol. I, pp.34-35, 43.
82 ibid, pp.37, 45.
83 ibid, p.76.
84 DBFP 2nd-IX, N53.
85 ibid, N58 & note 3.
86 ibid, Nos.61, 66.
87 ibid, N66 note 2.
88 Stimson, pp.100-102.
89 DBFP 2nd-IX, N101 note 2.
90 ibid, N84.
91 Bassett, p.13.
92 ibid, pp. 111-112.
93 See pp. 42-43 below.
94 DBFP 2nd-IX, N120 & note 3.
95 FRUS 1932, Vol. III, p.282.

96 DBFP 2nd-IX, N161.
97 ibid, N216.
98 ibid, N238 note 2.
99 ibid, Nos. 238 note 2, 239.
100 ibid, N216 note 1; Cab23/70 14(32).
101 DBFP 2nd-IX, N274; Cab23/70 11(32).
102 DBFP 2nd-IX, Nos.300, 305, 588, 614.
103 ibid, N321.
104 ibid, N347.
105 ibid, N267 & note 4.
106 ibid, N153; Cab23/70 10(32).
107 Cab23/70 11(32); Cab23/70 14(32).
108 Cab23/70 12(32); Cab23/70 14(32).
109 ibid.
110 DBFP 2nd-IX, N535.
111 ibid, N535 & note 9.
112 ibid, N636; FRUS 1932, Vol. III, p.280.
113 DBFP 2nd-IX, N612.
114 ibid, N114; FRUS 1932, Vol. III, pp.61-63.
115 DBFP 2nd-IX, N128 note 3.
116 ibid, N129.
117 ibid, N154.
118 ibid, Nos.155, 156.
119 Cab23/70 10(32).
120 FRUS 1932, Vol. III, pp.123-124.
121 ibid, pp.124-128.
122 ibid, pp.142-143.
123 ibid, pp.136-140.
124 ibid, p.147.
125 FRUS Japan 1931-41, Vol. I, pp.169-171; DBFP 2nd-IX, N211.
126 FRUS 1932, Vol. III, pp.153-155; DBFP 2nd-IX, N225.
127 ibid, N235.
128 ibid, N261.
129 ibid.
130 FRUS 1932, Vol. III, p.183.
131 DBFP 2nd-IX, N322.
132 FURS 1932, Vol. III, pp.183, 236; DBFP 2nd-IX, N257.
133 FURS 1932, Vol. III, p.236.
134 ibid, p.261; DBFP 2nd-IX, N397.
135 FURS 1932, Vol. III, p.282.
136 DBFP 2nd-IX, Nos.432, 433.
137 ibid, N455; FRUS 1932, Vol. III, pp.335-340.
138 Cab23/70 14(32).
139 FRUS 1932, Vol. III, p.353.
140 ibid, p.343.
141 DBFP 2nd-IX, N469. Immediately after these words, it reads, "Sir John Simon has already told Mr. Stimson how keenly the British Government wishes to keep in close co-operation with America over the whole field of the Far Eastern crisis and he is hopeful that the adherence of the Powers now at Geneva to the declaration proposed to be made by the Council of the League... might predispose those of them who are signatories to the Nine-Power Treaty to associate themselves with the American demarche also." This cliché was quoted by Chamberlain on November 5, 1936 in a Parliamentary debate to give the House proof that the failure to cooperate did not come from British side. [H.C. Debs. 5s Vol. 317, Col.379]
142 FRUS 1932, Vol. III, p.353.
143 ibid, p.373; DBFP 2nd-IX, N474.
144 ibid, N533.

145 FRUS 1932, Vol. III, pp.458-462.
146 ibid, p.502.
147 DBFP 2nd-X, N33 & note 1.
148 ibid, N34.
149 Cab23/70 17(32).
150 DBFP 2nd-X, Nos.62, 67, 71.
151 ibid, N55.
152 ibid, N674 note 2.
153 ibid, N228 & note 14.
154 ibid, N674 note 2.
155 ibid, N664.
156 DBFP 2nd-X, N674 note 2.
157 ibid, N674 & note 2, N639 & note 6.
158 ibid, N674 note 2.
159 Bassett, pp. 256, 263.
160 DBFP 2nd-X, N745 & note 1.
161 ibid, N746 notes 2, 5.
162 ibid, N746.
163 DBFP 2nd-XI, N4; *The Lytton Report*, pp. 71, 97.
164 DBFP 2nd-XI, N17.
165 ibid, N17 note 9.
166 ibid, Nos. 32, 37.
167 ibid, N53.
168 Cab23/73 62(32).
169 Cab23/73 64(32).
170 DBFP 2nd-XI, N53; Cab23/73 64(32).
171 Cab23/73 62(32).
172 As to the debates, see Willoughby, W. W., *The Sino-Japanese Controversy and the League of Nations*, Baltimore 1935, pp. 438-462.
173 *League of Nations, Official Journal, special supplement*, N111 p.50.
174 DBFP 2nd-XI, N121.
175 ibid, N103.
176 L/N O.J. ss. N111 p.50.
177 *Survey of International Affairs 1933*, p.493.
178 DBFP 2nd-XI, N155.
179 ibid, N233.
180 ibid, Nos. 224, 227.
181 ibid, N103.
182 ibid, N155.
183 ibid, N173.
184 ibid, N202.
185 ibid, N155.
186 ibid, N173 note 4.
187 ibid, N155 note 7.
188 ibid, N342.
189 ibid, Nos.260, 342.
190 ibid, N285.
191 *Survey* 1933, pp.504-509.
192 DBFP 2nd-XI, N387.
193 Cab24/238 C.P.48(33).
194 DBFP 2nd-XI, Nos.384, 401.
195 H.C. Debs. 5s Vol. 275, Cols. 109-110.
196 DBFP 2nd-XI, Nos. 391, 398, 407, 409.
197 ibid, N429.
198 ibid, N424.
199 ibid, Nos.421, 449; Survey 1933, p.513.
200 FRUS 1932, Vol. IV, p.300.

201 ibid, p.316.
202 DBFP 2nd-XI, N23.
203 FRUS 1932, Vol. IV, pp.405-406.
204 ibid, p.416.
205 ibid, p.427.
206 ibid, pp.428-429.
207 DBFP 2nd-XI, N206.
208 ibid, N462 note 4; FRUS Japan 1931-41, Vol. I, p.119.
209 Akira Iriye, "Japan's Foreign Policies between World Wars", in Robertson (ed.), *The Origins*, pp.251, 265-266
210 DBFP 2nd-XX, N39.
211 Gibbs, *Grand Strategy* (I), London 1967, p.120.
212 DBFP 2nd-XX, N64 note 1, N77 & note 1, N92.
213 Rose, p.126; Gibbs, p.94.
214 Feiling, p.253. Fisher developed his view in his memo of April 19, 1934, which Chamberlain said represented the view of the Treasury. [2nd-XIII, Appendix I & note 1.]
215 Gibbs, p.95.
216 DBFP 2nd-XIII, p.2.
217 DBFP 2nd-XX, N450, Gibbs, pp.93-96; Rose, pp.124-126.
218 DBFP 2nd-XX, N97.
219 ibid, N99 & note 3.
220 Gibbs, p.102.
221 ibid, pp.123-125
222 ibid, pp. 105, 126-127.
223 DBFP 2nd-XX, N149.
224 ibid, Nos. 77, 92.
225 See p. 60 above.
226 DBFP 2nd-XIII, N8.
227 ibid, Nos. 8, 14.
228 DBFP 2nd-XX, N164.
229 DBFP 2nd-XIII, N21.
230 ibid, N29.
231 ibid, N29 note 1, DBFP 2nd-XX, N219.
232 See DBFP 2nd-XIII, XX, XXI.
233 Louis, R., *British Strategy in the Far East 1919-1939*, Oxford 1971, pp.238-239, 266; Akira Iriye, *The Asian Factor*, in Martel (ed.), *The Origins of the Second World War Reconsideration*, Boston 1986, p.230. In addition, Thorne and Bassett also make some positive comments on the British Far Eastern policy. [Thorne, p.416; Bassett, pp.xx-xxiii.]
234 Thorne, pp.105-108; Adamthwaite, *The Making of the Second World War*, London 1977, pp.36-37; Bell, P.M.H., *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe*, London 1986, p.204.
235 Taylor, A.J.P., *The Origins of the Second World War*, London 1972, pp.222-223.
236 L/N O.J. ss. N111, p.51.
237 Jones, p.30.
238 See p.62 above.
239 Shay, R. P., *British Rearmament in The Thirties*, Princeton 1977, p.23.
240 DBFP 2nd-IX, N636 note 8; Cab23/70 17(32).
241 See Chapter 2, pp. 85, 89, 105-106; Chapter 3, pp. 129-130; Chapter 4 , p. 167.
242 When Eden met the Italian delegate Aloisi in Geneva in May 1935, the latter asked him, since "we had swallowed *la couleuvre* of Manchuria; why was Abyssinia creating such difficulties?" [Avon., p.208.] The Japanese Military Attaché in Berlin said on February 20, 1933, "Japan was now at a decisive turning point in her entire policy which could also be important for Germany... The trend in Japan that was pro-German and had always demanded that one stand by Germany in her fight against the Versailles Treaty... Now the way was becoming clear for cooperation with Germany. From now on Japan ... could fight against Versailles together with Germany."[*Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, C-I, N28.]

243 Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement: British Policy and the Coming of the Second World War*, London 1993, pp.40, 45.
244 Baer, G. W., *The Coming of The Italian-Ethiopian War*, London 1967, p.35.
245 DBFP 2nd-VIII, N823.
246 DBFP 2nd-IX, N267. Even Pratt had a similar estimate. [see ibid, N216.]
247 DBFP 2nd-IX, N153; Cab23/70 10(32); FRUS 1932, Vol. III, p.197.
248 Jones, p.398.

Chapter 2 THE FATE OF ABYSSINIA

I. THE ITALO-ABYSSINIAN DISPUTE

No sooner had the smoke of gunpowder in Manchuria died away than the curtain on the Italo-Abyssinian dispute was raised by the shots at Walwal.

Walwal belonged to Abyssinia but had been poached by Italian forces in the late 1920s. From 1931, Haile Selassie, the Abyssinian Emperor, intended to re-control the zone because of the importance of the wells, which were a source of life there. In November 1934, when an Abyssinian escort went to guard the wells, military confrontations occurred between the Abyssinian and Italian forces. After December 5th, these escalated into general fighting. On January 3, 1935 the Abyssinians invoked Art. 11 of the Covenant, and the League Council, with the participation of the British and French delegates, arranged direct negotiation between both disputants. Although the agreement about the establishment of a neutral zone had been reached late in February, deadlock persisted due to the uncompromising attitude of both sides. For example, the Abyssinians declared that since Walwal was within their territory, they had the right to defend it even by using force. They insisted that the dispute should be arbitrated by the League, but the Italians considered that the Walwal incident was evidence of Abyssinian aggression, and they refused to lay the case down for arbitration. In the meantime, they increase their military force in their East African colonies.[1]

On September 3 the Conciliation Committee decided unanimously that neither Italy nor Abyssinia could be held responsible for the Walwal incident.[2] The Committee of Five worked out a plan on the 18th whereby the independence and territorial integrity of Abyssinia would be respected and the administrative reorganisation should be put into force; "a special Italian interest" in the economic development of Abyssinia should be recognised. In addition, the British and French Governments had intimated that they were prepared to facilitate, by common sacrifices, "territorial adjustments" between Italy and Abyssinia.[3] This plan was accepted by Abyssinia but rejected by Italy.

On October 3, Italy, after long-term preparations, went to war against Abyssinia. A few days later the Council Committee drew the conclusion that the Italian military

operation constituted an act of aggression, and that economic sanctions should be imposed on Italy. Ignoring the League resolution, the Italians accelerated their military expansion. After they had occupied Abyssinia's capital Addis Ababa on May 5, 1936, they declared the annexation of the country.

II. THE IMPORTANT POLICY-MAKERS IN BALDWIN'S GOVERNMENT

During the early stages of the Abyssinian crisis, MacDonald was still Prime Minister, but his "mental and physical powers were clearly on the wane", and he himself was contemplating an exchange of posts with Baldwin.[4] In June 1935, Baldwin succeeded him as Prime Minister following Sir Samuel Hoare's succession to Simon as Foreign Secretary.

Baldwin was easy-going and humble with a nature of "shrewdness, kindness and decisiveness". "He was slow to move and act," being criticised for his appetite of leisure, and lack of clear instructions on foreign policy which he was not interested in. Like his predecessor, he had a fear of war and declining health. However, Hoare commented, "Baldwin, in fact, was exactly the man for keeping together a Three-Party Government."[5]

As soon as he took over, Baldwin realised that, since his "first duty" was "to groom the Party for an election, any Minister who had erred would have to be asked to go."[6] Due to the Peace Ballot of 1935, which showed that the majority of people held an affirmative attitude towards standing by the Covenant and countering aggressions by military and non-military means,[7] he gathered many votes from the electorate in his campaign by declaring the Government's manifesto was that "the League of Nations will remain as heretofore the keystone of British foreign policy."[8] However, he did not really want to fight for the Covenant. During the Abyssinian crisis, his repeated and emphasised underlying assumption of foreign policy making was to keep Britain out of war. Since he thought sanctions might lead to war, he told the House, "the moment you are up against sanctions you are up against war."[9]

In the Cabinet, Mr Neville Chamberlain, Chancellor of the Exchequer, had a stronger and stronger influence on foreign policy after 1933. Regarding the Abyssinian problem, he wrote in his diary of July 5, 1935,

> If we and France together determined that we would take any measures necessary to stop him [Mussolini], we could do so, and quite easily. We could e.g. stop the passage of his supplies through the Suez Canal. ... If the French would not play,... we should not attempt to take on our shoulders the whole burden of keeping the peace.

He was one of the advocates, who "nailed the British flag to collective security", but he was also the first minister openly appealing for this policy to be abandoned. He supported the appointment by the Prime Minister of Hoare as Foreign Secretary and Eden as Minister for League of Nations Affairs with a seat in the Cabinet, because he believed that this partnership would make "a powerful structure".[10]

As the Foreign Secretary, Hoare was "a shrewd and tough politician" with "a somewhat prim personality", which "was combined with an intense and often all-too obvious ambition." He admired Baldwin's leadership generally and enjoyed the closest relationship with Chamberlain, with whom he shared more common tastes and mutual understanding. However, he and his partner, Eden, "were by no means ideally suited in temperament and experience for a close ministerial relationship." Although Hoare desired some help from the young minister, Eden thought, as he reflected years later, that the appointment of two heads in the F.O. was a mistake. Due to Baldwin's lack interest in foreign policy, Hoare took full responsibility in the conduct of policy making.[11] His resignation due to the Hoare-Laval Plan showed that he was a person who would sacrifice himself rather than betray his colleagues. Perhaps because of this and his determination for appeasement as well as his genuine relations with Chamberlain, he continued to make an impact on foreign policy as one of Big Four, when he was appointed as Home Secretary in Chamberlain's Cabinet in late 1930s. As for the Abyssinian crisis, Hoare thought the course that Britain should pursue should be the double policy of "negotiation with Italy and respect for our collective obligations under the Covenant, based on Anglo-French co-operation."[12] He disliked the Abyssinians,[13] but sympathised with Italian expansion, and rejected coercive measures such as oil sanctions on the grounds that it might drive Mussolini to desperate acts or at least make him "more, rather than less, intransigent."[14] He believed that Britain could make Italy face up to reality by putting pressure on Anglo-Italian friendship, and through fomenting suspicion between Italy and Germany.[15]

Eden's general policy was little different from the new Foreign Minister's.[16] However, weighing the League with the peace of Europe on the one hand and Anglo-Italian friendship on the other, he favoured the former.[17] In theory, he laid stress on British international obligations and firm measures such as the imposition of an oil embargo on Italy, by which, he believed, Mussolini would be brought to heel.[18] In practice, although he advocated a policy of pro-League in Geneva to a certain extent, he went along with appeasement making. He was one of the creators of the Zeila Offer, and after he replaced Hoare as Foreign Secretary, he hesitated to impose the oil embargo on Italy too.

As to Van., his role in policy making was more important than that which he had played in the Manchurian crisis since he was one of the principal creators of the Zeila Offer as well as the Hoare-Laval Plan.[19] The key point that he always bore in mind was, as he said,

> My real trouble was that we should all choose between Austria and Abyssinia,...
>
> I was already resigned to choosing Austria ... because it was the first of Hitler's expansion ... [20]

He was in favour of making "some extensive concession" to Italy in Abyssinia as a solution of the dispute,[21] and he could usually get Hoare "under the influence of his singleness of purpose."[22] However, his relationship with Eden was not cordial.[23]

Apart from them, there were other members of the F. O. who also played a part in policy-shaping such as R. I. Campbell, Head of the Egyptian Department; Maurice Peterson, Head of the Abyssinian Department, which was newly formed in August, 1935, dealing with the Abyssinian problem; G. Thompson, Expert on Abyssinian affairs; Drummond, the British Ambassador in Rome; and Barton, the British Ambassador in Addis Ababa.

III. SIMON'S MEASURES: DECEMBER 1934 - JUNE 1935

Being called "the acid test" of the League, the Abyssinian case had a more significant impact on British opinion than did the Manchurian crisis on the grounds that it was related to the Anti-German front in Europe. In any case Italy was, after all, a European power, and Britain had long-standing interests in both the Middle

East and East Africa. The tendency of the Press, represented by *The Times*, the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Morning Post,* was to appeal to both disputants to moderate their positions because war, though it was quite unlikely at that time, would do no good to either side.[24] In the House, the Labour leader Attlee believed that "there is ... a great opportunity in this incident for re-establishing the authority of the League and the rule of law in Europe." The Opposition demanded that in the face of Mussolini's unreasonable ambitions, the Government should "up-hold the Covenant against an aggressor State, ... it is a matter that affects our honour and our vital interest."[25]

Like the Manchurian crisis, the Italo-Abyssinian dispute drove the British Government into a dilemma: the obligation to the Covenant of the League on one side and the friendship with Italy on the other. Simon, who was still in the seat of the F. O. at the time, denied in the House on February 19, 1935 that the Government had put pressure on Abyssinia "in the direction of conceding to the Italian demands."[26] On the other hand, he was actively pursuing an all-purpose course, which would "satisfy the due discharge of the duty of the United Kingdom as a member of the Council without impairing in the least degree the friendly co-operation between the United Kingdom and Italy in all matters."[27]

At the beginning of the Walwal incident, the British Government played the role of mediator, but the Italian attitude remained so "inelastic" that Simon soon agreed that "the disputes will go to the League."[28]

To cope with the problem, various proposals were contemplated. Thompson, in spite of sympathy for the Abyssinians, advised on December 12:

> ...on the general political grounds it is essential for us to avoid a squabble with the Italians over the boundaries of Ethiopia, ... we have two objectives, namely (1) to safeguard the watering and grazing right of our tribes in what is admittedly an Italian zone of influence, and (2) to bring about a détente between Italy and Ethiopia without allowing our existing relations with either country to be affected.... [29]

Van. emphasised in late December:

> Apart altogether from the desirability of easing the situation as soon as possible on colonial grounds, it is very essential that it should not be allowed at the present critical juncture to react in any way upon the relations between Italy and the League and thereby to affect the European question. ... The question must be seen as a whole.[30]

He told Drummond who shared his idea,

> the last thing we, the Foreign Office generally, and I in particular, desire is to have any bickering with Italy over Ethiopia or colonial matters.[31]

> With a little goodwill there would be plenty of ways out and a détente could, I am sure, be secured by mutual expressions of regret and a demarcation which might give substantial satisfaction to the Italians in the long run.[32]

He suggested to Simon that "an amicable settlement out of court at Geneva" was not only "the best solution available" but one that "should be easily possible", which, without the Council intervening, would have the great advantage of "face-saving potentialities for both sides".[33] But Eden reported from Geneva on the 16th that Mussolini's attitude had made a further attempt for direct settlement out of court "unavailing".[34] The F. O. realised their mediation was "at an end".[35]

In late February, it was almost certain that Mussolini would continue the adventure in Abyssinia. In his memorandum dated the 25th, Van. expounded the course that Britain should take:

> (1) We should endeavour to dissuade Italy from going the full length, firstly because it can hardly suit her, when she ought to have her hands free for graver matters in Europe; secondly because of the further, and perhaps deadly, blow that this must deal the League;...thirdly on account of the consequent reaction on a large section of public opinion ...

> (2) But all this must be done in the quietest, most friendly way. We must not be manoeuvred into playing an isolated and futile role of opposition. Both those epithets are now certain, seeing the attitude of France. ... we cannot afford to quarrel with Italy and drive her back into German embraces.

He asked Simon to explain these points particularly the second one to the Ministers.[36]

Eden also set down his opinion in a memorandum to the Foreign Secretary, in which he raised "in an acute form the responsibility of H.M. Government as a member of the League, and more particularly of the Council, in respect of recent developments in the Italian-Ethiopian dispute." He wrote:

> Italy aims at no less than the absorption of Ethiopia morsel by morsel. ... unless some hint, and a pretty strong hint, is given to the Italians that we should not view with indifference the dismemberment of Ethiopia,

> then this dismemberment will take place. ... a clear indication from ourselves and from France ... might effectively discourage Italy from the more ambitious of her plans.[37]

The Egyptian Department under Campbell's instruction suggested taking the standpoint that was in accordance with Eden's.[38]

On the 26th, Van., Eden and Campbell jointly drafted telegrams to Rome and Paris -- an urgent attempt to persuade Italy to use moderation and honour her understanding to the Council -- which were based on Eden's paper but represented the common views.[39] Simon fully approved of their proposals, and reported this to the Cabinet the next day.[40]

In April, Britain, France and Italy held the Stresa Conference aiming to consolidate their Anti-German front so that the Abyssinian problem was deliberately "excluded from the formal agenda".[41] The British and French statesmen completely agreed with Mussolini's expression that the maintaining of peace meant "the peace of Europe".[42] Informal conversations about the Italo-Abyssinian dispute, however, showed that the gap between Britain and Italy was far from bridged.[43] When Thompson told the Italian official Guarnaschelli that he hoped that the rumour of an Italian attack on Abyssinia was without foundation and warned that British public opinion would not tolerate any Italian aggression, his Italian colleague replied that "the possibility of an offensive could not be entirely dismissed", and he went on to say ironically that British public opinion

> had not taken very kindly to Japan's policy in Manchuria, but that this would doubtless not prevent the eventual recognition by His Majesty's Government of the existence of the new State of Manchukuo.[44]

It was very clear that Italy was contemplating large-scale military operations in Abyssinia as soon as the rainy season ceased and that the Italians would not accept the resolution from the Council as Japan had done in Manchuria. Facing this grave situation, Simon completed a memo, with Thompson's assistance, for the Cabinet on May 11, weighing the dilemma:

> If they support against Italy a practical application of League principles, their action is bound greatly to compromise Anglo-Italian relations and perhaps even to break the close association at present existing between France, Italy and the United Kingdom. ... the European situation would be most seriously affected, and it would... be more welcome to Germany. On the other hand, if the United Kingdom acquiesce in what

> would be a misuse of the League machinery by acting in a manner acceptable to Italy, ... His Majesty's Government will undoubtedly lay themselves open to grave public criticism. ... the League itself seems bound to lose, ... [having] before it the example of Japan...[45]

Considering his memo on May 15, the Ministers concluded:

> His Majesty's Government could not acquiesce in a procedure which must result, not only in nothing being done before September to prevent hostilities, but which gave no opportunity for anything to be done.

They thought that Mr. Eden should be allowed to use his discretion "as to the best course to be taken in his endeavours to secure this aim" and should discuss the question with the representatives of other countries "especially from the point of view of the risks to the League" at Geneva.[46]

IV. HOARE'S DOUBLE POLICY: JUNE - DECEMBER 1935

1. Public Opinion and Appeasers

During the period that Baldwin took his seat in the Cabinet, public opinion had been generally hardening against Mussolini. The newspapers such as the *Daily Mail* and the *Manchester Guardian* showed more and more sympathy with Abyssinia and support for an economic embargo against Italy. Churchill told Grandi, Italian Ambassador in London in September:

> since Parliament rose, there had been a strong development of public opinion. England, and indeed the British Empire, could act unitedly on the basis of the League of Nations, and all parties thought that that instruction was the most powerful protection against future dangers wherever they might arise.[47]

A most significant development in public opinion was that the League of Nations Union organised the Peace Ballot with the purpose of investigating public opinion about the issue of peace or war. The Ballot started from November 12, 1934 onwards, and its results, announced by Lord Cecil, the President of the Union, on June 27 of the following year revealed that the British public was strongly pro-League and intended to take firm action including economic sanctions and military means to defeat aggression.[48] No matter what comments might come from different quarters, the Ballot was, after all, the voice of eleven million people. Therefore, the Government could not afford to blind themselves to this, particularly in the period of

campaign. Baldwin please his electorate by declaring that Great Britain would firmly support the League in the struggle against aggression:

> Judgement may lead to action, cautionary action, restraining action, at the extreme to coercive action. We mean nothing by the League if we are not prepared, after trial, to take action to enforce its judgement.[49]

But privately he "had always thought the ballot misleading, the questions tendentious and over-simplified, and the picture of collective security divorced from reality."[50] He and Hoare, new Foreign Secretary, repeated in the House that Britain would stand by the League and prepared to fulfil her obligation bound by the Covenant. But at the same time, they declared, "We are not unsympathetic to the Italian need for expansion, and our actions since the War show that our sympathy is more than a sympathy of idle words."[51] Hoare simply turned down the suggestion, put forward by Lord Cecil, that Britain should vote for a general withdrawal of ambassadors from Italy if Abyssinia was attacked.[52] In his telegraphy of August 24, 1935 to Clerk, the British Ambassador in Paris, he confessed that "most people are still convinced that if we stick to the Covenant and apply collective sanctions, Italy must give in and there will be no war." However, he thought that "the world will have to face the fact that sanctions are impractical." But he instructed the Ambassador that "we must, however, on no account assume the impracticability of sanctions ... and the British Government must on no account lay itself open to the charge that we have not done our utmost to make them practical."[53]

The method that policy-makers used to cope with the public was that they pretended to uphold the slogan of the League in order to obtain the support from the electorate during the campaign on the one hand, and fixed the dice in secret to buy the aggressor off on the other. For example, the Zeila Offer, which ceded part of British Somaliland to Abyssinia in order to entitle the latter to make territorial concessions to Italy, had not been given to the House for consultation before it was produced.[54] While the Peterson-Quentin proposal was being hatched in the Autumn of 1935, Clerk told Laval[55] that however the elections in Britain might go, "the public opinion at home was such that no British Government could contemplate a solution" like that.[56] In these circumstances, the F. O. decided that "as soon as the elections in this country were over a new approach should be made to the French Government."[57] The Government believed that public opinion could be "moulded".

Shortly before the Hoare-Lavel conversation, the F.O. advised that "it would take three weeks to prepare the public mind for a negotiated settlement instead of sanctions."[58]

2. The Zeila Offer

When Sir Samuel Hoare replaced Simon as Foreign Secretary, he found that the measures of his predecessor had not been successful in making the Italians face reality.[59] Being confronted with the grave likelihood that Italy would attack Abyssinia soon, the British Government had to clarify two important points in order to form their policy: 1) Mussolini's price for peace[60] 2) the French attitude towards the dispute, which had not been clear since the Franco-Italian agreement signed on January 7.[61]

Regarding Mussolini's price, Drummond told the F.O. of his hypothesis in his despatch of June 1 that Mussolini might consider several alternatives: a) some form of mandate; b) some scheme under which Italy should play the part in Abyssinia that Great Britain played in Egypt; c) some kind of protectorate; and d) outright annexation. He presumed that Britain would have to envisage a) and b) if she would not (he was pretty sure that she would not) take coercive measures. He suggested that if the British Government could show the Italians that "within certain limits", they were prepared to help the latter "both at Geneva and Addis Ababa", the likelihood of any forthcoming recourse to armed conflict would be greatly reduced although he knew that his proposal was nothing but choosing the lesser of two evils.[62]

The intensive minutes showed that the F.O. had given his proposal serious consideration[63] but finally rejected it on the grounds, as Van. said, that none of the four alternatives would work.[64] However, they inspired him with the idea that

> if therefore we cannot satisfy Italy at Abyssinia's expense, we are, as before, confronted with the choice of satisfying her at our own, (plus some eventual Abyssinian frontier rectification) or letting things drift on their present disastrous course.[65]

At this time the new Secretary often held long conversations with Van. alone, and sometimes with Eden in attendance, as to what measures they would take.[66] Their discussion focused on the following problems, which in fact stemmed, to a

great extent, from the Government's Far Eastern appeasement and rearmament policy:

> First, Hitler's strength was becoming daily more formidable, and his intentions more unabashed. Secondly, Japanese aggression threatened us with war in the Far East when we were not strong enough to resist Hitler in Europe and at the same time fight in the Pacific. Thirdly, it was essential to British security to have a friendly Italy in the Mediterranean that would both guarantee our lines of communication to the Far East and make it unnecessary for the French to keep an army on the Italian frontier. Fourthly, and as a favourable pointer towards the maintenance of Anglo-Italian co-operation, Mussolini was at the time on very bad terms with Hitler.[67]

Van. analysed that Britain had been "over-landed" by comparison with Japan, Italy and Germany since Versailles, and British Somaliland was a real debit. Although he opposed trading Abyssinia, he opted for paying the price with British Somaliland rather than seeing "a disastrous explosion" that would wreck the League and very possibly His Majesty's Government too, given that an election was imminent at home. He said,

> I should like to see the question of Somaliland considered at least, while we can still get something for less than nothing.[68]

His proposition above was supposed to be the origin of "the Zeila Offer".[69]

On June 16 when Hoare, Eden and Van. spent the weekend together at Trent, all three "agreed on the offer" after discussion of Van.'s proposal.[70] Immediately, Van. drafted a note accounting for the Zeila Offer and its basic ground rules. Its essential contents included that the British Government should cede to Abyssinia the port of Zeila and a corridor, and in return be entitled to insist that Abyssinia should cede territory to Italy in the Ogaden country.[71] At the same time, they consulted Drummond about the proposal, and the latter's answer being favourable on the grounds that even though he could not foresee whether Mussolini would or would not accept it, it was "worth trying".[72]

On the 19th, based on Van.'s note, Hoare reported to his colleagues the Zeila Offer in details.[73] At the beginning, the plan being supported only by M. MacDonald, the Secretary of the Colonies, the Cabinet were "reluctant to take a decision" due to the suddenness of the move. However, they came to realise that "the only chance of persuading M. Mussolini to desist from military operations was

to take action at once" and in the end they approved of both the plan and Eden's mission to Rome to explain it.[74]

Five days later, Eden had an interview with Mussolini in which he outlined the Zeila Offer. The Duce refused the proposal on the grounds that it would strengthen and encourage the Abyssinians. Furthermore, he made Eden understand that he wanted all four sides of Abyssinia leaving the central region intact but under Italian control; otherwise, he would take the whole country by force.[75] Mussolini's insistence on his demand resulted in the failure of the Zeila Offer. Eden regarded this as "an end" of the Anglo-Italian conversation for peace terms,[76] but Van. and Hoare were unwilling to give up.[77] "Fed by Vansittart with fears of Germany, and warned by the Admiralty of the dangers of an unfriendly Mediterranean in the face of a threat from Japan, Hoare (as he told the American Ambassador on 9 July) was determined to make every possible effort to bring about a negotiated settlement."[78]

3. French Uncertainty

Since the Franco-Italian Agreement included a secret agreement relating to Abyssinia, the British Government had felt uncertain as to whether Britain could rely on French support if conflict occurred between Italy and Britain over the Abyssinian problem.

On January 12, Laval told Simon that the Agreement was aimed at guarding against Germany, particularly her Austria policy. It would not prejudice British rights in East Africa under the Treaty of 1906.[79] As to the secret agreement on Abyssinia, it implied that France would "not seek to develop any *new* concession or economic interest in Ethiopia" and both the French and Italian Governments agreed "to give effect to the policy of friendly co-operation" which they were following "with regard to territories adjacent to their African possessions".[80] Although Laval explained that he had mentioned "a free hand" to the Italians applying only to the economic sphere,[81] he had used this expression without any qualification.[82] In fact the Quai d'Orsay had been ready not only to give Italy a free hand in the major part of Abyssinia, but to concede part of the French colonies in East Africa before the Franco-Italian agreement.[83] Therefore, Laval left Mussolini the impression, if not in black and white, that Italy could have a completely free hand in Abyssinia since France had disinterested herself there.[84]

In June, Laval made another agreement with Italy -- a secret Franco-Italian military understanding signed by General Gamelin and General Badoglio -- by which these two countries would become a military alliance in the possible war against Germany. He said,

> This Treaty was of paramount importance; as long as Italy was France's ally we had a bridge leading to all those countries of Western and Eastern Europe which were then our allies. We could therefore not only benefit by whatever military strength Italy represented, but also by the added strength of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Rumania.[85]

Bound by a series of agreements with Italy, he was in a "somewhat delicate" position regarding Italian policy in Abyssinia,[86] so that he did not know how to choose "either horn of the dilemma" -- the collapse of the League or the end of Franco-Italian co-operation against Germany.[87]

On the 27th, in his conversation with Eden who had stopped briefly in Paris after his Rome mission, Laval complained that Britain had nearly played a trick on France by keeping the Zeila Offer secret from him. He told Eden that "French policy was to refrain from doing anything which would disturb or make less intimate existing Franco-Italian relations." He would not go further than "promote a settlement by arbitration and conciliation." "The best solution," according to him, might be "the maintenance of Abyssinian integrity under Italian suzerainty".[88]

4. Three Power Conference

In view of the fact that the gap between the Italian minimum demand and the Abyssinian maximum concession was too wide to be bridged, Mr Barton suggested to Hoare on July 1 that the only means which could be used were to hold an Anglo-French-Italian discussion under the agreement of 1906.[89] Meanwhile, the Italian Ambassador in London had made a similar suggestion.[90] On the 10th, Hoare reported those suggestions to the other Ministers and they came to conclusion that, pending the reply of the French Government to the suggestion, it was impossible to decide on an immediate policy.[91]

On the French side, Laval agreed to the suggestion with some hesitation and he insisted that it should be made clear what the exact object of the meeting would be; the meeting would be held in "a realist spirit" and should search for "possibilities of compromise".[92] What is worse, Mussolini's attitude was so changeable that he at

first was favourable to the meeting but later showed signs of opposition[93] on the grounds that the three power conference would get nowhere because he knew that it was impossible for Britain to support his desire to gain protectorate or at least tutelage over the whole of Abyssinia.[94] Not until late in July did he give any assurance to the condition for the three power conference that Italian representatives should go to Geneva and state their case there.[95]

On the 22nd and 24th, the Cabinet held meetings to discuss the problem. Hoare told his colleagues that if nothing came out of the three power meeting, he was averse to Britain being drawn into a blind alley. He felt that "the only card" in his hands was "the deterrent" -- "publicity and conversations with the French in order to get them to put pressure on Italy before the Geneva discussions."[96] His aim was to avoid "crude questions" between Britain and France being put by either side to the other as to "whether they were prepared to carry out their obligations under the Covenant." "The underlying assumption would be that both Powers realised their obligations and were therefore jointly interested in finding a way out of the difficulty" -- a settlement acceptable to Abyssinia and within the general framework of the League. Although not optimistic at the time he analysed that the difficulty that Italy was confronted with might bring her to face reality.

His line was generally agreed by his colleagues and he was instructed to continue his efforts so as to induce the French Government to combine with the British Government in putting pressure on the Italian Government to modify their attitude.[97]

Two weeks before the three power conference, the French Delegate at Geneva suggested to Eden that the British Government "should make clear to the Italian Government the limits within which they were prepared to work"[98] but the F.O. was not in favour of the suggestion. Campbell said, "If we did so earlier, M. Mussolini might make our statement an excuse for getting out of the discussion." Mounsey, Assistant Under Secretary, feared that the French advice seemed to aim at thrusting Britain "into the forefront of discussion with Italy ... in order to enable the French Govet. to keep in the back-ground and play as anodyne a part as possible." Hoare, Van. and Eden all came to the same view.[99] On August 6, Ministers held a meeting to decide the line that Eden would pursue in the three power meeting. After discussion, they concluded that in close co-operation with France Eden should lay

before the Italian the alternatives: either acceptance from Abyssinia of certain concessions within the framework of the League or the carrying out by the League of the procedure laid down in the Covenant. But in reference to the latter aspect, "any detailed discussion of sanctions should be avoided".[100]

Almost at the same time, Van. received a letter from Chatfield, the First Sea Lord, which revealed the unhappy consequence of the Government's limited naval programme of June 1934.[101] The First Sea Lord wrote that according to the Report of Chiefs of Staff,

> The Naval situation is bad enough, ... everything possible should be done to avoid precipitated hostilities with Italy until we are more ready. ... It would be a dangerous prospect for us to go to war with Italy with the British Fleet unmobilised and the Home Fleet on leave and scattered.[102]

In the light of these events, Van. told Hoare of his pessimistic estimate of the result before he accompanied Eden to the conference,

> I am therefore leaving for Paris with little hope,... I consider that we should be very cautious as to how far and in what manner we force the pace in Paris, with an unreliable France and an unready England.

Hoare minuted on the document, "Many thanks for this letter. I entirely agree with you."[103]

The Three Power Conference was held on August 16 but broke down within two days on the grounds that there was no common basis between Britain, France and Italy.[104]

5. Collective Security and Economic Sanctions

The Cabinet held an emergency meeting on the 22nd to consider the situation arising out of the failure of the Three Power Conference. In the course of discussion, many references were made with regard to the grave effects of present British military weakness on diplomacy. Being anxious to avoid a war with Italy, Ministers agreed that they "should keep in step with the policy of the French Government, particularly in the matter of sanctions." Also they should carefully refrain from "trying to force other nations to go further than they were willing, and should generally make it clear that the question of sanctions was one which the members of the League had to examine in co-operation, and with a view to collective action."[105] This policy was later known as "collective security" described

in Hoare's speech of September 11 at Geneva,[106] having been drafted with the help of Chamberlain, Eden and Van.,[107] and which Baldwin "endorsed fully":[108]

> If the burden is to be borne, it must be borne collectively. If risks for peace are to be run, they must be run by all. The security of the many cannot be ensured solely by the efforts of a few, however powerful they may be. On behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom I can say that in spite of these difficulties they will be second to none in their intention to fulfil within the measure of their capacity, the obligations which the Covenant lays upon them.[109]

Being broadly supported by many important statesmen such as A. Chamberlain, Lansbury, Lloyd George and Churchill,[110] this policy, as Hoare explained, had a two-fold purpose: one was a warning to Germany as well as to Italy,[111] the other was that by stressing collective action particularly Anglo-French co-operation, and collective responsibilities, Britain could avoid the risk of taking the lead in pressing the French to go further than they were really willing and then finding herself in an isolated position, facing the conflict with Italy.[112]

In their conversation in Geneva, both Hoare and Laval came to the same conclusion that war with Italy was "too dangerous and double-edged for the future of Europe". Both agreed that they would try to "avoid provoking Mussolini into open hostility"; any economic pressure on Italy should be collectively decided and applied cautiously in stages, with full account of non-members of the League.[113]

On October 3, the Italo-Abyssinian war began. A few days later, the Council decided to impose economic sanctions including an arms embargo on Italy but excluding oil and other key commodities. After all Italy was able to get whatever she needed as long as she paid cash in gold.[114] Nevertheless, Van. still insisted that Britain should "not proceed *at all* with sanctions" until she got from France all-aspect assurances, particularly military support.[115] Hoare agreed[116] and told Eden that many Ministers had "a considerable feeling that he had taken the initiative too much at Geneva", and he should "go as slow as possible" until the French attitude had been cleared up.[117] But it was too late because Eden had already declared in favour of imposition of economic sanctions on Italy in Geneva.[118] Under these circumstances, Eden suggested pressing the French Government both in London and in Paris to offer the assurances.[119] Due to this constant pressure from the British Government, "Laval came reluctantly to heel."[120] He replied, if Britain was attacked

by Italy because of the former's collaboration with the League, the French military support of Britain was "assured fully and in advance."[121]

In late November, the Council stated that an oil embargo would be considered soon.[122] Van. believed, what he had gathered from Grandi, the Italian Ambassador in London and Clerk, the British Ambassador in Paris, that if an oil embargo was provoked, Mussolini would make war on Britain. He warned Hoare and Eden that the British Government should not proceed, or allow others to proceed at Geneva with an oil embargo until they were sure of the adequacy of their own measures of defence and supplies of munitions, and that they were sure, in practice, of support from France as well as from other Mediterranean countries. Hoare agreed with his opinion. Meanwhile, Van. called back the Oil Paper for the Cabinet and modified it to this end after discussion between the three. The Cabinet received the Oil Paper on November 29 but decided to postpone discussion on it until the meeting of December 2.[123]

6. The Hoare-Laval Plan

No sooner had the Zeila Offer failed than Van. said on June 24, 1935, "we must have a further shot at this;... the issues are infinitely too great to take a first no, however uncompromising, for a final one." This comment met with an immediate agreement from Hoare.[124]

At Geneva in September, Laval told Hoare and Eden that there was some room for further discussion since Mussolini had "a secret desire to avoid war".[125] He suggested that the Zeila Offer might be recast with "something new to it" -- France "could cede a strip of territory alongside the British strip". Hoare thought it would be valuable if the experts could meet to work out a new proposal which satisfied Italy without striking at Abyssinia's sovereignty.[126]

On the 24th, taking Mussolini's demand into account, the F. O. produced a new proposal of cession of territory to Italy.[127] Before their discussing it with Eden, Van. pointed out to Hoare that in view of "a strong and aggressive Germany and a weak England",

> it is not to our interest either to force this burning question anywhere near a conflagration, if it can be by any means avoided. ... the Council must make a further and enlarged effort for peace, ... and that the form of the enlargement, or extra inducement, must be the change of

> territorial satisfaction which we have propounded. That is, Bale instead of Ogaden, plus some additional satisfaction as to advisers.

He thought that Bale, unlike Ogaden, was a fertile zone that could be given to satisfy Mussolini.[128]

Based on the proposal and discussion above, he drafted a revised plan, which, after Hoare had initialled it, was sent to Eden in Geneva with the request that he should consult Laval.[129] But Eden's reaction was totally negative on the grounds that it was hard to believe that "the offer of one additional province to Mussolini even associated with a promise of a number of other benefits would be likely to secure cessation of hostilities and negotiation of a peaceful settlement with Abyssinia." With the dispute "at a most critical stage" and the whole world watching to see "how the League would acquit itself in its duty", this proposal would "arouse suspicion" as to the integrity of the British policy. Nor did Eden agree to inform Laval because the latter, as he said, "would be only too glad of a hint from us ... He will jump at any chance to delay the functioning of the League machinery and if we give him any excuse to do so we may have reason to be sorry for it."[130] He told Hoare that Laval had already put forward a plan that included giving Italy a mandate for large portions of Abyssinia.[131] In their communication with Eden, both Hoare and Van. thought the French plan "impossible" and insisted that their foregoing proposal was "possible" and had "a double purpose": first, "to divert M. Laval from the unacceptable proposal"; second, and more importantly, to make "a final attempt at peace". They instructed Eden that the British proposal might be "either for immediate or eventual use" in due course.[132]

Meanwhile, the British Government learnt through the French that Mussolini's peace terms included the Italian mandate over Abyssinia territories to cede to Italy,[133] In the F. O. there was a lot of discussion and suggestion on the Italian peace terms taking place. Van. thought that the Italian terms were "a distinct step in advance" and they should be given an answer in "an encouraging tone". Peterson held a similar stand-point.[134] Thompson suggested: (1) Mussolini's terms should be discussed with the French on the basis of the British line as soon as possible and (2) unless and until the British Government had reached agreement with the French and Italians as to the terms of settlement, they should not themselves suggest that they

should be given a mandate to discuss outside Geneva. Peterson added two further points: (3) the reply referred to in (1) should, when agreed with the French, be made to Mussolini, (4) the Italian peace terms[135] were impossible to accept on the grounds that they were not even accompanied by any promise to suspend hostilities in Abyssinia. Van. agreed with the substance of these suggestions and urged Hoare and Eden to give them an immediate consideration.[136] Being instructed by the Cabinet that he "should receive any Italian overtures for negotiations for a settlement outside the League of Nations very coolly" and "treat them with caution",[137] Hoare had a discussion on the subject with Van., Peterson and Oliphant, Peterson then being sent to Paris on October 23 "to explore the situation with the French Government".[138]

Two days later, Peterson reported that he had successfully persuaded his French partner, St. Quentin, to accept his idea and drafted a proposal for the basis of a settlement which included,

> (a) In the outlying zone (non-Amharic), territories under Italian mandate or any form of Italian administration.
> (b) Appropriate involvement of Italy in the collective assistance system regarding the core zone (Amharic country).
> ...
> (a) and (b) A specific regime must be provided for the outlying provinces with non-Amharic inhabitants in which population decreased as a consequence of war, slavery and famine etc. ...[139]

But this draft of the Peterson-Quentin proposal was rejected by the F. O. on the grounds that it would be impossible to accept it either at Geneva or Addis Ababa. "The right and least complicated road to a solution" should be, in Hoare's opinion, "by a simple exchange of territory... rather than by any more complicated and probably unacceptable devices such as a) and b)."[140] But Peterson held his ground and explained that in drawing up terms of settlement,

> there are two main points of departure -- viz. the exchange of territory and Italian participation in the League plan of assistance. ... I still think, rightly... the best line of approach to a settlement was from the second point of departure rather than the first, from the point, that is, of Italian participation in the League scheme of assistance rather than from that of exchange of territory.[141]

Laval also told the British Government of his fear that a simple exchange of territory would not satisfy Italy.[142] This was scorned by Van.,

> M. Laval does not like our suggestion, but can suggest nothing better. He does not really know the subject. The Italians are now ready for the exchange of territory via Zeila, which they originally rejected. ...the Italians wd. now get more than Ogaden & Danakil...[143]

Since they were afraid that before the Election public opinion would not support the Government who proposed such a plan,[144] the F. O. decided that they would discuss "a new approach" with the French Government as soon as the Election was over.[145] The Government won the Election on November 14 and Peterson was sent back to Paris again a week later with "more precise instructions".[146] A new "Peterson Proposal" was soon created.[147] This time, it was accepted in principle by the F. O. including Eden,[148] and with a little revision by Thompson under Van.'s instruction. It turned out as follows:

> (a) a League plan of assistance for Ethiopia, subject to (b) and (c);
> (b) exchange of Adowa, Adigrat, Danakil (not including Aussa) and most of the Ogaden against a port and corridor;
> (c) the endorsement by H.M. Government of some such formula as the following:
> 'H.M. Government undertake to use their influence in order to secure for Italy the fullest possible facilities of economic development and settlement of such areas in Southern Abyssinia as may be suitable for these purposes and as may hereafter be determined. The realisation of this programme must be effected within the framework of the plan of assistance formulated by the Committee of Five, it being understood (a) that Ethiopian sovereignty over the regions affected will be maintained intact, (b) that the League of Nations shall be accepted by both Italy and Abyssinia as arbitrator in all cases of dispute.'[149]

Towards the end of November, Laval told Clerk that he hoped to have a meeting with Hoare as soon as possible and an appointment was made for December 7 when Hoare would have a stop in Paris for a few hours on his way to Switzerland for a holiday.[150]

Meanwhile, some information from the Italian side attracted the attention of the British Government. On November 2, the Italian delegate Baron Aloisis said and repeated to Hoare in Geneva that if Britain and France considered an outlet at Assab inadequate, they "would go back to the Zeila proposal": Hoare felt it a very important suggestion.[151] Shortly before the Hoare-Laval conversation, Van.

interviewed first the Italian General Garibaldi and then the Italian Ambassador in London, Grandi, from whom he gathered the latest Italian peace terms:

(1) The Bale-Ogaden, cession. (2) The Adowa-Adigrat essions. (3) A corridor only in the Banakil and in Harrar province designed to take the desired railway. (4) the economic monopoly between 37 and 40 as suggested.	*In exchange for*	Ethiopian access to the sea [152]

In the Cabinet meeting of December 2nd -- the last meeting before his departure for Paris -- Hoare reported to his colleagues all of the above. He pointed out that a possible oil embargo at Geneva against Italy might raise the risk of Mussolini's "mad dog" act -- a plan of Italian attack on the British interest in the Mediterranean, "but there was no reason to get in a panic about it."[153] As to the oil embargo, he said that "The various countries concerned had provided a more solid front than we had reason to expect" and the United States had shown a co-operative attitude. It was almost impossible to say that the oil embargo would not be collective and effective; in the other words, Britain had no excuse of escaping from taking a part. Since the Government fought the Election on the basis of supporting the League, any other course of action would be "disastrous and indefensible". Therefore, he consulted his colleagues as to "whether sanctions ought to be brought in at once" when the League Committee met on December 12, or whether to give the peace discussions "a better chance" by postponing the date of sanction until later. He personally proposed that "on the whole the issue depended on the prospect of the peace talks in Paris" with an oil embargo kept hanging over Mussolini's head as a pressure to bring about concessions. He told them that Peterson had been in Paris engaged in discussions but that satisfactory progress had not been made. He himself would see Laval on his journey, and he would "try and press on peace talks" with Laval and at the same time find out what the French attitude was towards Anglo-French military co-operation against possible attack from Italy.

In the course of discussion, Baldwin invited the opinion of every Cabinet member. Lord Monsell, the Admiralty, and Lord Swinton, the Air Minister gave

ministers the military experts' view. They emphasised that the grave situation in the Far East did not enable the British forces to concentrate in the Mediterranean:

> The defences of Singapore were still incomplete, and our position in the Far East depended on the British Navy. So long as the Fleet was tied up the Mediterranean the position would be difficult. ... if we suffered losses, whether in the Fleet or the Royal Air Force, we should lower the datum point from which the expansion of our forces (as dealt with in the Report of the Defence Requirements Committee) would start.

Therefore, military deficiency caused by the Government's policy required appeasement in the Mediterranean, as they said:

> our defence forces and defences in the Mediterranean were not in a proper condition for war, and from this point of view it was urged that an effort should be made to obtain peace, holding the threat of the oil sanction over Italy,...

Some Ministers worried that from the point of view of British trade

> sanctions were involving very serious loss,... Sanctions I, II and III had been agreed to because they would put pressure on Italy with the least possible cost to trade. the proposed Sanction IV (the oil embargo) was leading us further down the path. It was impossible to turn back but the proposed oil embargo made the position very serious.

They pointed out that if the oil embargo irritated Mussolini and provoked a "mad dog" act, he would fail and "disappear from Italian politics and there might be a Communist Government in Italy and a complete alteration in the whole European situation." They were afraid that "the position would be worse in the future if, having attempted sanctions, sanction failed." Only Eden and Duff Cooper, War Minister, seemed to express some different viewpoints. The former warned his colleagues that postponement of an oil embargo would result in breaking the common front at Geneva, and the latter thought that the importance of the shortage of anti-aircraft ammunition had been exaggerated and postponement of an oil embargo for a few weeks or a month "was not going to make much difference" in military preparedness. However, toward the end of the meeting, Ministers generally supported Hoare's proposal on the grounds that "the object of oil sanctions was to stop war. If the war could be stopped by making peace that would be better." Baldwin said that "on broad lines there was general agreement, as proved by the discussion." The Cabinet realised that there was only a short time for both the peace

and military conversations with France but they hoped that the issues would have been cleared up before the next League Committee meeting on December 12. Therefore, Hoare should press on by "every useful means" in discussions with France, with a view to peaceful settlement, and if the basis for settlement was found before December 12, the date of the oil sanction should be postponed. Hoare was also instructed to bring questions back to the Cabinet only in the circumstances that either "the peace talks did not offer any reasonable prospect of a settlement" or "France was not willing to co-operate effectively."[154]

It was apparent when they gave their Foreign Secretary discretion to search for a basis for settlement along the broad lines, the Cabinet did not classify the terms "every useful means" or "basis for settlement". Nor did Hoare ask how far he could go with Laval because he did not think it necessary.[155] He once complained to Chamberlain, "As you may imagine I have received little or no help from other quarters. Stanley would think about nothing but his holiday and the necessity of keeping out of the whole business almost at any cost." This time he did not obtain much help from his colleagues either. Before his journey to Paris, he discussed the matter with Baldwin. Busy with the problems facing the new Government, the Prime Minister had little time to give him more "implications" for Paris conversations, and only said, "Have a good leave, and get your health back, ... push Laval as far as you can, but on no account get this country into war."[156]

However, Hoare foresaw the importance of Paris trip. After making "all arrangements for the conduct of business" in his absence, he wrote to His Majesty on December 2, asking for leave. It reads,

> As my visit to M. Laval on Saturday may be very important, I am proposing to take Vansittart with me. If, as I hope, M. Laval and I agree upon a basis for a peace negotiation, Vansittart will stop on in Paris for a day or two in order to clinch the details. ... In the normal course the Secretary of State and the Permanent Under Secretary are never absent from London at the same time. the special importance, however, of this meeting makes, I suggest, it necessary for me to take him.[157]

This letter kept in the F.O. file was not intended to be a secret to his colleagues.

The Paris meeting was held on the afternoon of the 7th once Hoare had arrived.[158] In the conversation, he was terribly misled by Laval as Peterson reported

to the Cabinet on December 10 that Hoare had been pleased at Laval's reception of his proposal for joint Staff discussions though he was "unaware that those discussions would made what appeared to have been an inauspicious start." He "had been satisfied with Laval's promise that France would fulfil her engagements". However, he doubted whether Laval could carry French public opinion with him:

> This uncertainty as to the French attitude had perhaps been a factor in the discussion of the French proposals for a settlement. It was possible that the French might have been induced to offer terms that were less favourable to Italy, but in that event the French could not have guaranteed that they had a reasonable prospect of success. The French had seemed rather confident regarding the present proposals, which gave the impression that they might have taken "soundings" in Italy.[159]

Finally, both sides came to an agreement that they must press on with the negotiations. Were an embargo to be postponed, there would have to be a good hope of a successful outcome in the negotiations. Hoare insisted that the proposals must be kept within the framework of the report of the Committee of Five and that a mandate must be excluded.[160] Having discussed at length, they set up the basis of the proposals as follows,

> (1) an outlet to the sea for Abyssinia,
> (2) in exchange for the outlet the cession of some of the occupied territory in Tigre to Italy and a frontier rectification in the east and south-east,
> (3) a large zone in the south and south-west in which Italy acting under the League will have the monopoly of economic developments.[161]

After the meeting, Hoare sent the report to the F.O., where it arrived on the following day.[162]

On the 8th, Sunday, the Hoare-Laval Plan, which was a synthesis of the Peterson proposal and the Italian peace terms,[163] was "knocked into final shape", and both Hoare and Van. were "well satisfied" with the work.[164] Laval kept in daily telephone communication with Mussolini during the Paris peace talks[165] but insisted that the Abyssinian Emperor should not be given the proposals.[166] Before he left Paris, Hoare told the Press that the British Government had not yet been informed of the Plan.[167]

That night Peterson brought it back to London with the note by Hoare, which urged the Cabinet to accept the Plan.[168] On the Monday morning, Eden was the first

Cabinet member to read the documents, since Peterson went to him directly after arriving. He was shocked at these proposals with their "signs of hasty drafting" and without English translation, which in his opinion went far beyond the resolution of the Committee of Five or the guide-lines previously established by the F. O.[169]

On the very same day, the Cabinet held a special meeting to consider the Plan. While supporting it, Eden felt bound to warn his colleagues that "the new proposals went in some respects a good deal further than the earlier proposals of the Committee of Five." Some features of the Plan were unlikely to be favoured by the League. He suggested that the Abyssinian Emperor should be informed, and that the meeting of the Committee of 18 on December 12 should take place as arranged both the British and French delegates stating the Plan at the meeting. In the course of discussion, there emerged a sharp criticism that Italy's aggression had gained her more than she could have obtained otherwise. It was recognised that it would cause difficulty if any of the three sides -- Italy, Abyssinia and the League -- rejected the Plan, particularly if Italy and the League accepted but Abyssinia refused. However, if Italy accepted it while the League and Abyssinia rejected, the first thing they had to do in this event would be "to try and negotiate a more acceptable basis."[170] In spite of criticism of the Plan, no-one censured Hoare for exceeding his authority, and no-one denied that this was a possible basis for settlement either.[171]

The Cabinet finally agreed to Eden's proposal that

> peace terms ought to be communicated to Abyssinia at the same time as to Italy, and that the Emperor should be strongly pressed to accept them as a basis for discussion, or at least not to reject them.[172]

On the following day, Ministers continued the discussion. They realised that "the political difficulties which were likely to confront the Cabinet on this issue all arose from the fact that Abyssinia was likely to reject the proposals", which "might involve the Government in a difficult situation." It was certain that

> France would not agree to any new sanctions or to be implicated if new sanctions resulted in military consequences. In that event, in accordance with the Cabinet decisions, this country also would not be willing to involve itself in any new sanctions liable to provoke extreme action by Italy.

Chamberlain suggested that

> If Italy accepts and Abyssinia refuses, His Majesty's Government would neither propose nor support the imposition of further sanctions...

This suggestion met with the general approval of the Cabinet.

In addition, the Prime Minister had received a question from Mr. Attlee, asking that the House be informed of "the nature of the proposals". The Press also asked for guidance, and particularly wished to know "whether His Majesty's Government had agreed to any proposals." The policy-makers decided that the answer was that "no suggested basis has at present been submitted for the views of either Italy or Abyssinia and it would clearly be premature to make a statement on the subject at present." At the same time, they endeavoured to avoid arranging debates before December 17.[173]

At the Cabinet meeting of December 11, disagreement and criticism of the Plan became stronger. Eden clearly showed his disagreement by pointing out that

> a good many members of the League would dislike the proposals. Some would not be willing to interfere with the United Kingdom and France if they thought that peace would come of it.

He hoped that

> he would not be expected to champion the proposals made to Italy and Abyssinia in detail at Geneva. He was not likely to be successful if he made the attempt ...

On the other hand, an oil embargo was not favoured by many Ministers. Baldwin emphasised that the embargo would not be effective without American co-operation. He said, "Until we knew what America was going to do we should hold our hand." They instructed Eden that he

> must not say that we would in no circumstances agree to the imposition of an oil sanction at some future date, or that recent events had removed sanctions altogether from the field of action.

They learned that there was strong reaction of public opinion because "a good many people had pictured an end of the dispute in which the aggressor would have lost considerably both in material and prestige." The result of the Plan "would come as a shock to public opinion." As to this, Ministers agreed that "public opinion ought to be gradually prepared for a different result to what it had expected." In

spite of abandoning the Plan, they decided not to show any definite attitude -- either positive or negative -- towards it in the House.[174]

Meanwhile, leaks from Paris stirred up public opinion.[175] In Geneva, the Hoare-Laval Plan met with serious criticism from various quarters.[176] The Abyssinian Emperor was "bewildered" by what Britain had done.[177] In Britain, almost all newspapers, such as *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Herald*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express* unusually took the same line this time in criticising Government.[178] The *Spectator*, a weekly paper, commented sharply against the Plan for giving

> Italy as a reward for her aggression, or as a bribe to buy her off, far more than she could have got from an award of just arbitrators before the war began. By even countenancing such a deal, let alone accepting responsibility for it, the Foreign Secretary has jettisoned in a day both his own personal reputation and his country's.

The Press published a great many anti-Hoare-Laval letters received from various quarters. Geoffrey Dawson, the editor of *The Times*,[179] had "sketched out a leader trying to show the Government the strength of public feeling".

The pressure groups also lost no time to act. The League of Nations Union reached a resolution on December 12, urging the Government "to support no settlement of the Abyssinian dispute which fails to make it clear that aggression does not pay". Its Executive Committee sent a wire to Eden to ask the Prime Minister to receive a deputation from the Union. Miss Freda White, a staff of its Information Department, quoted the words of a Tory member, "The whole gang must go. Baldwin and Hoare and all of them. It's a national disgrace!" In addition, the National Council of Labour pronounced an "emphatic protest" against the Hoare-Laval Plan. At the meeting of Manchester University, a resolution calling on the Government to withdraw its support from the Plan was passed by 234 votes against 2.[180]

The pressure from Parliament shook the Government more heavily. Thousands of critical letters poured in to MPs. Harold Nicolson, National Labour member for West Leicester, wrote in his Diaries of December 10 and 11,

> Find the House seething because of the Abyssinian proposals. They have appeared in the Press, and Baldwin, when questioned by Attlee, made the mistake of saying that there had been a "leakage" in Paris, thus implying that the press reports were true in substance.

> The feeling in the House is still enraged against the Laval agreement.

He said that "Sam Hoare has completely and absolutely let us down. I feel very deeply about it and shall certainly not vote with the Government unless I am convinced that they have not done what they seem to have done. But I believe they have."[181]

Moreover, many Conservative members were aware that they had been betrayed by their leaders as quoted by Attlee from one of their letters:

> As a lifelong Conservative I write to you to say that I consider the difference between the Paris peace plan and the pre-Election pledges of the Government so great, that I am bitterly ashamed of having supported the Government at the last Election. [182]

On December 17, the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee held a meeting with some 50 government members present. Most of them were in opposition to the Plan. They asked their Chairman Sir Austen Chamberlain to see the Prime Minister and convey the Committee's unfavourable view.[183] The climax was the debates in the House on December 19, Attlee insisted that the resignation of the Foreign Secretary was not enough, and the Government should resign unless they gave a satisfactory explanation.[184]

However, according to Peterson's understanding, the Government still stood by the Plan on December 14.[185] In fact, until the 17th when they met, the Cabinet agreed that no decision could be taken in Hoare's absence. Whereas, at that meeting, Ministers were more and more afraid of "the present excited state of public opinion on the subject". Chamberlain conveyed the message to the Cabinet from Hoare, in which the Foreign Secretary said,

> the public were thinking of peace terms which could only be obtained as the result of far greater pressure on Italy than it had as yet been possible to apply. In these circumstances the Foreign Secretary took the view that the League of Nations ought to be faced up to the reality of the situation.

Although some Ministers did not agree with Hoare and suggested the Plan be dropped, Chamberlain took Hoare's side. In the end, the Cabinet generally approved of the line, suggested by Chamberlain, of "boldly defending, not so much the Paris proposals themselves, as the principles on which they had been based." They

instructed Eden to make a statement in Geneva that the British Government was no longer pressing acceptance of the Plan. The Prime Minister would see Hoare after the meeting to "clear up the position".[186] That day, Baldwin, Chamberlain and Eden went to see Hoare, who had returned the day before but was kept in bed, having broken his nose. Baldwin said to him, "We all stand together."[187]

The funeral bell for the Plan rang on December 18 when the Cabinet met again to discuss the broad lines that could be adopted for the House Debate the following day. Baldwin confessed that "though he was not rattled, it was a worse situation in the House of Commons than he had ever known." He had been informed that Austen Chamberlain "intended to lead the onslaught, which would then be irresistible". It was true as Churchill described later,

> This crisis nearly cost Mr. Baldwin his political life. It shook Parliament and the nation to its base. Mr. Baldwin fell almost overnight from his pinnacle of acclaimed national leadership to a depth where he was derided and despised. His position in the House during these days was pitiful.[188]

In the course of discussion, Ministers tried to find the outcome of the Cabinet crisis. Chamberlain said that due to the strength of public opinion, "the Government could not adhere to the Plan". He suggested some pretext that Hoare could use to ward off responsibility: e.g. his "tiredness" prevented him from making a reasonable judgement, or he had been "greatly misled by his staff". But Mr O. Stanley, the President of the Board of Education feared that the effect of such a speech would be disastrous to the future of the Government, because of the public, who "had been let in for this issue at the Election without being told what the real position was." Simon quoted the Motion on the Order Paper,

> That the terms put forward by His Majesty's Government as a basis for an Italo-Abyssinian settlement reward the declared aggressor at the expense of the victim, destroy collective security, and conflict with the expressed will of the country and with the Covenant of the League of Nations, to the support of which the honour of Great Britain is pledged; this House, therefore, demands that these terms be immediately repudiated.

He sought to influence his colleagues by saying:

> The public were under the impression the Foreign Secretary had gone out to Paris with instructions from the Cabinet to negotiate a peace. This was not the case. The position would be improved if the

> Secretary of State were to say that he went to Paris not with instructions to negotiate, but that things developed in this way and that he had then sent the proposals home.

Cunliffe-Lister, the Air Minister suggested that

> The Government were bound to admit that they regarded the Paris proposals as dead. They would never have approved negotiations on those lines if they had been asked to do so before the Foreign Secretary went to Paris; nor could they ever agree in the Paris *Communiqué* expressing satisfaction with the terms.

Although Baldwin had not made up his mind as to whether Hoare should resign or not, Ministers generally agreed, as Halifax, the Lord Privy Seal, said, that "while it was possible to make a case against the worst attacks, this could not be done without admitting a mistake." In this event, "*the Foreign Secretary ought to resign.*" This seemed the best method to save the Cabinet from crisis.[189] Knowing that it would be "something he had hardly ever done before", Chamberlain went to Hoare after the meeting and gave him an account of the Cabinet decision. Hoare was determined to defend the Plan and in consequence to resign.[190]

In his speech of resignation on December 19, Hoare told the House that his reason to resign was that

> I feel that I have not got the confidence of the great body of opinion in the country, and I feel that it is essential for the Foreign Secretary, more than any other Minister in the Government, to have behind him the general approval of his fellow countrymen. I have not got that general approval behind me to-day, and as soon as I realised that fact, ... **without any suggestion from any one** (bold -- Author), I asked the Prime Minister to accept my resignation.[191]

The real reason for his resignation still remains unknown because no-one knew what Chamberlain had told him that day.[192] However, one thing is clear and that is that the Foreign Minister was made a scapegoat, partly due to being misled by Laval, partly due to a misunderstanding between him and his colleagues, and partly due to abandonment from his friends.[193]

V. EDEN'S ATTEMPTS: DECEMBER 1935 - MAY 1936

As Hoare's successor,[194] Eden's line, as he explained to Sir Barton, differed little from the double policy, being "two-fold":

> While the Members of the League continue to apply such measures of economic and financial pressure ... the League must neglect no opportunity of trying to find a settlement of the dispute by agreement between the parties.[195]

Having been terribly delayed by the Hoare Plan, the oil sanction was now put on the agenda of the League again,[196] which would be still effective.[197] However, in their exchange of views, Van., concerned about the imminence of an oil embargo, told Eden that he did not think the British delegate should in any case "propose" but only "support" the enquiry. Taking his suggestion into account, Eden reported to the Cabinet on January 9 that the British delegate at Geneva "should not oppose, but should support, though, if possible, not himself proposing, that the committee should consider probable effectiveness of oil embargo."[198]

Meanwhile, the Japanese had continuously pin-pricked British interests in the Far East, and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff warned the Cabinet on the 17th that

> With a hostile Italy, ... our Lines of Communication through the Mediterranean would, in time of war, become precarious if not impossible. ... It seems unlikely, in the present unsettled and inflammable state of affairs in Europe, that any British Government would allow the fleet to get so far away from the vital area in Europe.

Their conclusion was that

> So long as affairs in Europe remain unsettled, our interests in the Far East, ... are at the mercy of the Japanese. It would seem a reasonable precaution, therefore, to try, by every means and even at some cost, to safeguard, by an amicable agreement with Japan, interests which we are unable to protect by military measures.

Although they knew that there were some major obstacles, for example, the issue of Manchukuo, the attitude of the League and America etc., they argued that

> In view, however, of our extremely weak military situation in the Far East, it is felt to be essential on strategical grounds that every possible effort should be made to overcome these political difficulties.

As for Italy, they estimated,

> it is probable that after the present crisis is over, Italy will find it convenient for financial or other reasons to abandon her hostile attitude towards us.[199]

When the Cabinet considered this memo together with the F.O. comment on it on the 29th, a Minister (perhaps Chamberlain) suggested some possibility of carrying out the suggestions of the Chiefs of Staff. However, Eden, representing the view of the F.O., pointed out that "it was easier to desire them, however, than to find in current events a good opportunity for promoting them in the general interests." The Government , he said, had in fact done "their best in recent years to cultivate friendship with Japan, stopping only where the price has been too high." Based on these debates, the Cabinet instructed the Chiefs of Staff and the F.O. to have further discussion on "whether better opportunities could not be found".[200]

The Italian trouble was thus tangled with the Japanese disturbance. The British policy-makers, while they had to appease Japan further, found that it was more difficult for them to take a firm line towards Italy. Having favoured the oil embargo in the past, Eden now became very hesitant to take action due to the following factors: an omen of Abyssinian military collapse was in sight;[201] the Hoare Plan had damaged world opinion, particularly the good will of America to cooperate with the oil embargo,[202] and the French showed more unwillingness in co-operation over extending sanctions after the failure of the attempt at buying peace.[203] He was quite uncertain as to whether the oil embargo was too late to be effective and to what line Britain would adopt in the League meeting of March 2.[204] He first agreed that if the oil embargo "was deemed ineffective", the League should pass "a resolution re-affirming its willingness to apply an oil sanction", but with a report referring to the fact that the United States would probably take umbrage at it.[205] However, a few days later when he interviewed the French Ambassador in London, he abandoned this idea, saying "it would be very difficult for us all to meet in Geneva to take note of the fact that we could not expect United States co-operation in the oil sanction, say therefore we would not apply that sanction, and all come home again."[206] Having set forth the pros and cons, he suggested in the Cabinet meeting of February 26 that the League ought to impose the oil sanction. In the discussion, all arguments were considered. Opinions against were based on the grounds that the principal burden of sanctions would fall upon Britain, owing to her vast trade. By contrast,

the main arguments in favour of the sanction stressed that imposition of the oil embargo would save the League's face and the Government's reputation. Convinced by the second opinion, Baldwin shifted to the side in favour of the sanction. In the end, it was decided that Britain should support the imposition of the oil embargo on the basis of the co-operation of other members of the League (essential in the case of the French). Eden was instructed however not to take the lead.[207]

During the Council meeting in early March, Eden had several conversations with M. Flandin who succeeded Laval as Foreign Minister on January 24 to seek French support on the subject. But there was "marked uneasiness" during the course of the conversation and Flandin seemed to be "little if at all better than M. Laval."[208] Instead of accepting Eden's idea that the oil embargo might work and save the League's face, M. Flandin insisted that it would probably be ineffective, and its result would be to cause Italy to withdraw from the League, thus making it weaker. He was also very worried that the extension of sanctions would lead to war or to an Italian denouncement of the military agreement with France and *rapprochement* with Germany when the German threat was approaching.[209] Owing to the fact that Flandin was very keen on making an attempt at conciliation between Italy and Abyssinia before taking a decision on the oil embargo, Eden thought it "best to acquiesce" though he did not presume that it would be hopeful. He reported to his colleagues that if the policy of conciliation were tried out, Flandin would probably agree to the imposition of the oil embargo.[210]

In view of the fact that the appeal for negotiation was accepted both by Italy and Abyssinia, the Committee of 13 decided to postpone its assembly until March 23.

In early April, after considering the situation, the Cabinet agreed that if no success in direct negotiations was achieved by April 8, Britain was "prepared to take part in any extension of sanctions which other nations were jointly prepared to apply."[211] As expected, the direct negotiations led nowhere. However, the French attitude towards the oil embargo had shifted from hesitation to opposition on the grounds that due to German re-occupation of the Rhineland on March 7, prospects of further German action in Europe were now so near and so menacing that the Abyssinian question must at all costs be dropped.[212]

The best part of April elapsed with endless discussion between the British and French Governments focusing on whether negotiations on conciliation should continue and whether the oil embargo should be imposed.[213] The French inactivity barred the Council from taking any decision on the imposition of the oil embargo.[214] During the period of this delay, the Italians had won their major battles and controlled Addis Ababa on May 5. Instead of destroying the aggressor, the oil embargo was itself killed by Anglo-French "co-operation".

VI. COMMENT

The policy of appeasing Italy was an important component part of general appeasement in the 1930s. It is unanimously agreed, as Thorne and Carr comment, that "the Abyssinian affair was to provide a final, major test" to the League, and "the Italian victory was a grave blow to the League".[215] Some historians consider it as "the first great act of appeasement " and "a turning-point on the road to war."[216] However, as for the Hoare-Laval Plan which was criticised as a diplomatic scandal at that time, A. J. P. Taylor argues that

> this was a perfectly sensible plan, in line with the League's previous acts of conciliation from Corfu to Manchuria. It would have ended the war; satisfied Italy; and left Abyssinia with a more workable, national territory.

He implies that failure of the plan resulted in the breakdown of the Stresa Front that was a deterrence to Hitler's expansion.[217] Eubank also justifies Britain's acquiescence in Italian invasion on the grounds that "Had British soldiers battled Italian armies in Africa in 1935, Hitler would have been free to move troops into Central Europe".[218]

Taylor and Eubank's arguments show that they have not learned from the Second World War the basic lesson that the aggressors' ambitions were unlimited, and they still believe that it was wise for the appeasers to use one aggressor as a deterrent against another without organising anti-aggressive struggle under the League. Suppose that the Hoare-Laval Plan had been carried out, would it satisfy Italy completely and keep her as a deterrent to German expansion? It was highly unlikely. The Plan might satisfy Mussolini temporarily. However, nobody could guarantee that he would not go on to take over the remaining part of Abyssinia as

Hitler did to Czechoslovakia in March 1939. In fact, although the plan did not come into being, Britain and France had provided him with the most favourable situation, which allowed him to succeed in his conquest of Abyssinia. Had the Plan been carried out, the result would have been much the same. However, Mussolini was not satisfied and went on to intervene in the Spanish Civil War and to invade Albania. Italy broke away from Stresa because her ambitions were similar to Germany's in that both planned expansion by aggression, and because the conflict of interests between herself and her Stresa partners was, in the long run, fundamentally unresolvable. Indeed, as early as the Stresa Conference in April 1935 that was more than half a year before the Hoare-Laval Plan, Mussolini had realised that he had to abandon Austria in order to concentrate on Abyssinia.[219] Therefore, it was an illusion for the appeasers to think that they could keep Italy on their side by offering her a deal, as later experience proved. For example, in April 1938, by signing the Anglo-Italian agreement, Great Britain agreed to recognise Italy's sovereignty over Abyssinia, and in return, Italy would withdraw her troops from Spain. However, after putting his signature to the agreement, the Duce sent another 4,000 volunteers to Spain. Therefore, the Hoare-Laval Plan could not have made Italy an anti-aggressor even if it had been carried out, although its failure resulted in the breakdown of the Stresa. (In fact, Italy never declared her breaking off officially. Until the Anschluss, she was still considered as a Stresa power.)

In addition, there is little evidence to support the argument that if Britain was involved in a war with Italy in 1935, Hitler would send troops into Central and Eastern Europe. Attention should be drawn to the following: Hitler declared conscription in May, and his task was to build up an army of 600,000 in 1936. During the Rhineland episode, he could only send 20,000 troops to the zone. In 1935, the second phase of German rearmament under the Second Four Year Plan had not yet started. The German army's equipment was not up-to-date either in quality or quantity. The second service had the more doubtful value.[220] Under these circumstances, it was impossible for Germany to break the military resistance of countries in Central and Eastern Europe (even the latter did not rely on French assistance). On the contrary, it was ironic that Britain was not involved in any war after mid-1930s, but it did not form a deterrent to Germany's expansion in Central

and Eastern Europe. Therefore, it was Britain's inactiveness and not her involvement in war that made Hitler believe that his adventure would not be hindered by the Western Powers.[221]

Just as during the Manchurian crisis, British foreign policy 1935 - 36 was a failure. However, it differed slightly from the former in the fact that in the 1935 crisis, the British Government showed a tendency to take a more severe stand-point than they had in 1931 because this crisis was closer to Europe. The double policy included a strong and active aspect, i.e. to bring Italy to conciliation *by using pressure.* Had the oil embargo been imposed and had a closure of the Suez Canal been put into force, Italy would have been easily beaten.[222] Mussolini's "mad dog" action was unlikely to have been carried out since it would have meant nothing but suicide. In other words, Britain had a greater opportunity of winning this time. But instead of experimenting with pressurising measures, she in practice took the line of rewarding the aggressor -- from the Zeila Offer to the Hoare-Laval Plan -- with a higher and higher price. The reasons for this contradiction between theory and practice can be found in the following factors:

Firstly, the consequence of Far Eastern appeasement led to appeasement towards Italy. When they faced the Italo-Abyssinian dispute, the appeasers found that they could not afford to offend Italy because Japan was left unchecked in the Far East. If Britain was involved in trouble in the Mediterranean, Japan would seize the opportunity to jeopardise British interests in the Far East. On the other hand, encouraged by the Japanese success, the Italians used Manchuria to justify their adventure in Abyssinia. Aloisi, the Italian delegate in Geneva asked Eden straight-out, "We had swallowed *la couleuvre* of Manchuria; why was Abyssinia creating such difficulties?"[223] The Japanese, however, showed Mussolini their full sympathy and understanding. In addition, being neutral, Hitler implied that he did not mind if Italy wanted to "swallow" up Abyssinia. In return, Mussolini stood with folded arms when Germany reoccupied the Rhineland.[224]

Secondly, being confronted with an imminent German threat, the British policy makers were under the illusion that they could keep Italy on an Anti-German front. They failed to see through the aggressive nature of Italy just as they failed to perceive the unlimited ambitions of German and Japanese. Historical fact has proved

that sacrificing Abyssinia did not prevent Italy from approaching Germany; nor did it make the British policy-makers concentrate on checking German expansion in Central Europe.

Thirdly, French unwillingness to become involved destroyed every possibility of executing vigorous action. Concerned about the emergence of a dangerous Germany, France was not willing to defend Abyssinia as well as the League, at the cost of losing its Italian ally. She helped the aggressor much more than she supported Britain. The French Government made use of every possible excuse and did their utmost to bar the League from taking any fatal decision. Although she never supported France in the latter's struggle against Germany, Britain whole-heartedly followed France in pursuing joint appeasement this time. Therefore, their co-operation achieved nothing but British diplomatic failure and Italian military victory.

During the Abyssinian crisis, public opinion showed an unprecedentedly strong tendency to be pro-League and anti-aggression, which put a great pressure on the Government. Although they were not prepared to take any coercive action to check Italy, the British leaders deceived the electorate by declaring their support for the Covenant, aiming to gain the vote. On the other hand, they secretly devised a plot to sell Abyssinia at the cost of sacrificing the principles of the League, and carried this out as soon as they had won the election. The public was misled and misinformed until the leakage of the Hoare-Laval Plan. In the face of furious public opinion stirred up by this diplomatic scandal, Baldwin and his colleagues cleverly shuffled off responsibility upon the Foreign Secretary so as to save the Cabinet. After they had passed through the Cabinet crisis, Baldwin invited Hoare back into the Cabinet a few months later. Hoare, as one of the Big Four, was still in a position to decide policy. Therefore, the public was able to prevent the Government from carrying out a particular step of appeasement such as the Hoare-Laval Plan, but could not prevent it from formulating and pursuing the course of appeasement.

Among the British policy-makers Hoare should certainly bear more blame for the diplomatic failure than anyone else. In spite of being a scapegoat, he himself insisted on the Hoare-Laval Plan due to his toughness. Baldwin's responsibility was not less than Hoare's on the grounds that although he was not interested in foreign policy, he

laid the basis of the policy that the Foreign Secretary must keep the country out of war. In addition, his brief and ill-defined instructions to Hoare resulted in misunderstanding and confusion in policy making. As a ministerial partner, Eden was well known for his anti-Italian and pro-League attitude. However, he was not at all heroic when it came to "facing the dictators". After he took over the F.O., he, like Hoare, accommodated the French and likewise hesitated to impose an oil embargo on Italy.

Furthermore, the British policy-makers failed to learn their lesson correctly. On June 10, 1936 Chamberlain spoke to the 1900 Club "to draw what lessons and conclusion" they could from the crisis:

> I see, for instance, the other day that the President of the League of Nations Union issued a circular to its members in which he ... urged them to commence a campaign of pressure ... with the idea that, if we were to pursue the policy of sanctions, and even to intensify it, it is still possible to preserve the independence of Abyssinia. That seems to me the very midsummer of madness.... Is it not apparent that the policy of sanctions involves, I do not say war, but a risk of war? ... is it not also apparent from what has happened that, in the presence of such a risk, nations cannot be relied upon to proceed to the last extremity unless their vital interests are threatened?

Earlier than that, Chamberlain had already pointed out, in view of the failure of collective security,

> My proposal was that we should abandon the idea that the League could at present use force. ... It should be kept in being as a moral force and focus, but for peace we should depend on a system of regional pacts, to be registered and approved by the League.

Therefore, he urged Eden to reform the League.[225]

Appeasement in the Abyssinian crisis once again strengthened the aggressors and weakened the Western Powers themselves. After Italy conquered Abyssinia, Britain faced a much more grave situation: apart from the chronic Far East crisis and the isolation of the United States, she had to face the collapse of the League and the intertwinement of the Italian problem and German expansion, which made it more difficult for her to formulate a firm line. A direct consequence of the Abyssinian crisis was, however, that it indicated clearly to Hitler that his Rhineland campaign would not have to contend with intervention by the Western Powers.

1 Toynbee (ed.), *Survey of International Affairs 1935* (II), pp.113-143

2 *Documents on International Affairs 1935* (II), pp.55-60.

3 ibid, pp.106-110, 134.

4 Thompson, G., *Front-line Diplomat*, London 1959, p.96; Simon, Viscount, *Retrospect*, London 1952, pp.205-206; Templewood, Viscount, *Nine Troubled Years*, London 1954, pp. 28-29.

5 Middlemas & Barnes, *Baldwin: A Biography*, London 1969, pp. 22, 24, 759, 806, 929-930, 960, 962-964; Jones, *A Diary with Letters 1931-1950*, London 1954, pp. xxiv, xxx, 175, 190; Templewood, pp. 30-31, 164, 291; 64; Simon, p.275. Captain Macnamara, a Conservative back-bencher wrote about his personality, "Lord Baldwin, the defender of democracy, was in reality a dictator. His personality was very strong and almost irresistible. It permeated into every cranny of the building (the palace of Westminster) and oozed out into the whole land. He built up around him a camarilla that did not disturb the atmosphere; to some fog, to others restful dream clouds." [Thompson, N, *The Anti-Appeasers: Conservative Opposition to Appeasement in the 1930s*, Oxford 1971, p.135.]

6 Middlemas & Barnes, p.807.

7 The Peace Ballot of 1935 asked people to vote upon five questions: 1. Should Great Britain remain a member of the League of Nations? 2. Are you in favour of an all-round reduction in armaments by international agreement? 3. Are you in favour of an all-round abolition of national military and naval aircraft by international agreement? 4. Should the manufacture and sale of armaments for private profit be prohibited by international agreement? 5. Do you consider that, if a nation insists on attacking another, the other nations should combine to compel it to stop by (a) Economic and non-military measures? (b) If necessary, military measures? Its result showed:

Question	Yes	No	Doubtful	Abstentions
1.	11,090,387	355,883	10,470	102,425
2.	10,470,489	862,775	12,062	213,839
3.	9,533,558	1,689,786	16,976	318,845
4.	10,417,329	775,415	15,076	315,345
5 (a).	10,027,608	635,074	27,255	855,107
5 (b).	6,784,368	2,351,981	40,893	2,364,441

Total votes: 11,559,165.

See *Survey 1935* (II), pp.48-51.

8 Dalton, H., *The Fateful Years 1931 - 1945*, London 1957, p.72; *Survey* 1935 II, pp.54-55.

9 Middlemas & Barnes, p.836.

10 Feiling, K., *The Life of Neville Chamberlain*, London 1946, pp.243-244, 264-265, 268-296.

11 Robbins, K. (ed.) *The Blackwell Biographical Dictionary of British Political Life in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford 1990, pp.206-207; Rose, *Vansittart, Study of a Diplomat*, London 1978, pp.163; Templewood, pp.30-36; Cross, J.A., *Sir Samuel Hoare, a Political Biography*, London 1977, pp.111, 112, 186; Avon, pp.217-218.

12 Templewood, pp. 160-161.

13 Hoare wrote in his Memoirs, "We also had found the Abyssinians bad neighbours. The Amharic Government of Addis Ababa had little authority over the tribes and races of the south and west, Gallas, Somalis, Leiba and Shifta wandering gangs, disloyal Rases, anti-Christian Moslems, Arab slave traders and intriguing adventurers, who one and all did much as they liked in this remnant of medieval Africa." [Templewood, p.150.]

14 Avon, p.294; *Documents on International Affairs* 1935 (II), p.48.

15 Templewood, p.152.

16 See p.105 below.

17 Avon, p.244.

18 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N175 note 4; DBFP 2nd-XV, N557; Avon, pp.198-200.

19 Templewood, pp.152-155; Vansittart, *The Mist Procession*, London 1958, p.530; *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*, 2nd-XIV, N 639 note 6, Nos. 662, 664; DBFP 2nd-XV, N293.

20 Vansittart, p.522.
21 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N295 note 7.
22 Templewood, p.138.
23 See Chapter 4, note 28 below.
24 Waley, D., *British Public Opinion and The Abyssinian War 1935-6*, London 1975, pp.17-19.
25 H.C. Debs. 5s, Vol.302, col. 2194.
26 ibid, Vol.298, col. 325.
27 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N273.
28 ibid, N80.
29 ibid, N41 note 2.
30 ibid, N58.
31 ibid, N78.
32 ibid, N64.
33 ibid, N89.
34 ibid, N115.
35 ibid, N115 note 3.
36 ibid, N175.
37 ibid, N175 note 4; Avon, pp.198-200.
38 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N175 note 4.
39 ibid, N178 note 1; Avon, p.200.
40 ibid; DBFP 2nd-XIV, N178 note 1.
41 ibid, N218 note 2.
42 Parker, R.A.C., *Chamberlain and Appeasement, British Policy and the Coming of the Second World War*, London 1993, p.29; Warner, G., *Pierre Laval and The Eclipse of France*, London 1968, p.78.
43 DBFP 2nd-XIV, Nos. 230, 231, 232, 233, 234.
44 ibid, N230.
45 ibid, N253.
46 ibid, N270 note 3.
47 Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, London 1948, p.533; Waley, pp.30-33.
48 See note 7 above.
49 George, M., *The Warped Vision: British Foreign Policy 1933-1939*, Pittsburgh 1965, p.60.
50 Middlemas & Barnes, pp.835-836.
51 *Documents on International Affairs* 1935 (II), pp.47-50.
52 Waley, p.113.
53 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N493.
54 Nagle, T.W., *A Study of British Public Opinion and The European Appeasement Policy 1933 - 39*, Librairie Chmielorz 1957, p.51.
55 Pierre Laval was French Minister for Foreign Affairs 1934-35, President of the Council 1935-36.
56 DBFP 2nd-XV, N219.
57 ibid, N215.
58 Waley, p.13.
59 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N295 note 7.
60 ibid, N296 & note 3.
61 Cab23/82 36(35).
62 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N296.
63 ibid, N296 note 24, N304.
64 ibid, N309. Thompson minuted on June 11 that the "weakness of these suggestions is that each one implies the disappearance of Ethiopian independence ... the people of that country ... fully appreciate that in the present crisis they have only one thing to lose -- their freedom. For this they will fight." [ibid, N296 note 24.]
65 ibid.
66 Templewood, pp.152-153; Avon, p.220.
67 Templewood, p.153.
68 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N301.

69 ibid, N301 note 7.
70 Templewood, p.155; DBFP 2nd-XIV, N308 note 1.
71 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N308.
72 ibid, Nos. 309, 312, 315.
73 ibid, N308 note 7.
74 Cab23/82 33(35).
75 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N325.
76 ibid, N330.
77 ibid, N320 note 8.
78 Middlemas & Barnes, p.841.
79 DBFP 2nd-XII, N335.
80 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N145.
81 ibid, N327.
82 Adamthwaite, A.P., *The Making of the Second World War*, London 1977, Document 27, pp.150-151; Villari, L., *Italian Foreign Policy Under Mussolini*, New York 1943, p.124.
83 Laurens, F. D., *France and The Italo-Ethiopian Crisis 1935 - 1936*, Paris 1967, p.18.
84 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N320; Warner, pp.67-68.
85 Laval, p.34; DBFP 2nd-XIV, N326 note 4.
86 ibid, N121.
87 ibid, N327.
88 ibid, N310.
89 ibid, Nos. 329, 335.
90 ibid, N346.
91 Cab32/82 36(35).
92 DBFP 2nd-XIV, Nos. 354, 348.
93 Cab23/82 39(35).
94 DBFP 2nd-XIV, Nos. 366, 372.
95 ibid, N380.
96 Cab23/82 39(35).
97 Cab 23/82 40(35).
98 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N420.
99 ibid, N420 note 4
100 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N426.
101 See Chapter 1, p. 61 above.
102 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N426 note 6, N431
103 ibid, N434 & note 8.
104 ibid, Nos. 456, 465.
105 Cab23/82 42(35).
106 DBFP 2nd-XIV, Appendix IV.
107 Templewood, p.166; Feiling, p.268.
108 Middlemas & Barnes, p.855.
109 DBFP 2nd-XIV, Appendix IV.
110 ibid, Nos. 480, 481, 483.
111 ibid, N555 note 1.
112 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N477.
113 Templewood, pp.168-169; DBFP 2nd-XIV, Nos. 553, 554, 564;.
114 *Survey1935* (II), pp.221-222.
115 DBFP 2nd-XV, N83 note 4, N27 note 5.
116 ibid, N83 note 4.
117 ibid, N86 & note 2, N87 note 2.
118 Avon, p.283.
119 DBFP 2nd-XV, N77.
120 Avon., p.283.
121 DBFP 2nd-XV, N115.
122 ibid, Nos. 237, 270.
123 ibid, N251 & note 12, N270 note 1. The "oil paper" by Hoare and Eden indicated that on November 21, M. Vasconcellos, Chairman of the Co-ordination Committee at Geneva

advocated to Committee of 18 that the proposal of the extension of the embargo to oil, coal, iron and steel should be considered without delay. Among the countries from whom Italy received oil, the Soviet Union, Roumania, India, Iraq and Netherlands had replied agreeing to the proposal. In addition, the U. S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull said on November 15 that export of oil for war purpose was directly contrary to the general spirit of the recent Neutrality Act. If an oil embargo had been imposed, it could at least have hampered Italy's war in Abyssinia even if it were not decisive. [ibid, Nos.237, 270.]

124 DBFP 2nd-XIV, N320 note 8.
125 ibid, N553.
126 ibid, N564.
127 ibid, N639.
128 ibid, N662, N 639 note 6.
129 ibid, N664 & note 4.
130 DBFP 2nd-XV, N29.
131 ibid, N7.
132 ibid, N29 note 2, N36.
133 ibid, Nos. 91, 108.
134 ibid, N108 note 3.
135 ibid, N122.
136 ibid, N120 note 6.
137 Cab23/82 45(35).
138 DBFP 2nd-XV, N134; Peterson, M., *Both Sides of The Curtain*, London 1950, p.115.
139 DBFP 2nd-XV, N151. The original document is in French.
140 ibid, N162.
141 ibid, N177.
142 ibid, N166.
143 ibid, N166 note 5.
144 ibid, N219.
145 ibid, N215.
146 ibid, N233; Peterson, pp.116-117.
147 DBFP 2nd-XV, N254.
148 ibid, N254 note 4, N292. Eden minuted on December 6, "I agree that we cannot go beyond the basis proposed by Mr. Peterson, and though I do not carry its terms definitely in my head, I have my doubts as to whether the Emperor could be expected to accept it with an enthusiasm." [ibid, N314 note 7.]
149 ibid, N292.
150 ibid, N274; Templewood, pp.177-178.
151 DBFP 2nd-XV, N175 & note 3.
152 ibid, Nos. 314, 258. As for Hoare's interview with General Garibaldi, see ibid, N278.
153 The documents of the F. O. showed that the ratio between the British and Italian naval strengths in the Mediterranean was about 3:2. Eden as well as some other ministers thought that the danger of "mad dog" action was "very remote" because it would cause the isolation of the Italian forces in Abyssinia. If the Italians had attacked the British fleet in the Mediterranean, it would have been nothing but "suicide".[DBFP 2nd-XV, N185; Cab23/82 50(35); Avon., p.296.]
154 Cab23/82 50(35).
155 Hoare wrote, "I had no intention of committing the Government to any final plan. Even if Laval and I were able to agree, we were only, at the request of the League, and in continuation of the recommendations of a League Committee, making a purely provisional scheme for bringing together the two disputants that would be referred to Geneva for final approval or rejection." [Templewood, p.178.]
156 ibid, pp.164, 178.
157 DBFP 2nd-XV, N293.
158 On the British side there were Hoare, Clerk, Van. and Peterson attending the meeting, and the French partners included Laval, Leger, St. Quentin and Massigli.
159 Cab23/82 53(35); as to record of the conversation, see DBFP 2nd-XV, N338.
160 DBFP 2nd-XV, N330.

161 ibid, N337.
162 ibid, N330.
163 Templewood, p.185.
164 Peterson, p.121; Avon., p.299.
165 Peterson, p.119.
166 DBFP 2nd-XV, N347. Obviously Peterson did not tell the truth in his memoirs. He said that they did not inform the Abyssinians because there were "no telephone lines to Addis Ababa", and furthermore, the Emperor was fighting on the northern front far away from the capital. [Peterson, p.120.]
167 DBFP 2nd-XV, N335.
168 ibid, N337; Peterson, p.121; Avon., p.300.
169 ibid, p.300; Peterson, p.121.
170 Cab23/82 52(35).
171 ibid. Eden said in the House on December 10, " If Italy and Abyssinia and the League accept to discuss on the basis of the suggestions made in Paris, there is nobody here who is going to say No, even if some of those proposals may not be particularly appealing to us." [*Documents on International Affairs* 1935 (II), p.354.]
172 Cab23/82 52(35); also see Eden's telegrams to Barton. [DBFP 2nd-XV, Nos. 353, 352.]
173 Cab23/82 53(35).
174 Cab23/82 54(35).
175 Waley, p.48; Peterson p.121; Nicolson, N (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1930-1939,* London 1966, p.230.
176 DBFP 2nd-XV, Nos. 363, 365, 384, 389, 403.
177 ibid, N380.
178 H.C. Debs. 5s. Vol. 307, col.2019.
179 Dawson was an intimate friend of Baldwin, Chamberlain and Halifax, and strong supporter of their appeasement. there was very often an exchange of views between him and the top British leaders on the Government's policy and the international affairs. "By the mid 1930s, *The Times* had gained the reputation of being an official spokesman for the British Government." [Gannon, F. R., *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*, Oxford 1971, p.70; *The History of The Times*, London 1952, pp. 863, 870-871, 892-893, 923.]
180 Waley, pp.54-63.
181 *Harold Nicolson's Diaries*, pp.230, 232.
182 H.C. Debs. 5s. Vol. 307, cols. 2019-2020.
183 Waley, p.65.
184 H.C. Debs. 5s. Vol. 307, cols. 2017-2018.
185 Peterson, p.121.
186 DBFP 2nd-XV, Appendix III (a).
187 ibid; Templewood, p.185. Chamberlain did not want Hoare to leave either. A few days before when D. W. Gunston, his parliamentary private secretary said to him that it looked as though "Hoare would have to go", he replied indignantly, "He can't, he's the Foreign Secretary!". [Waley, p.63.]
188 DBFP 2nd-XV, Appendix III (b); Petrie, Sir Charles, *The Life and Letters of The Right Hon. Sir Austen Chamberlain* (II), London 1940, p.404; Churchill, p. 143.
189 DBFP 2nd-XV, Appendix II (b).
190 ibid; Templewood, p.185.
191 *Documents on International Affairs* 1935 (II), pp.392-393.
192 It seemed that there was some agreement between him and his colleagues because 1) it was not true that he said that he decided to resign "without any suggestion from any one". This apparently showed the purpose of saving the Cabinet from the crisis by scarifying himself; 2) it could be considered as a reward to him that in only a few months he returned to the Cabinet as the Admiralty.
193 From the Cabinet conclusion of December 2, Hoare understood that in Paris conversations Laval and he would "agree upon a basis for a peace negotiation", which was of "special importance", although the Cabinet did not discuss the peace terms in detail. He stayed in Paris about 2 days instead of a few hours as planned. All Cabinet members knew the urgency and importance of the forthcoming discussion and the possible peace terms -- the

Peterson-Quentin Proposal and the latest Italian demands. But they seemed to have a different explanation. Eden said, "We did not, however, discuss any possible terms of peace, either at Cabinet or, so far as I know, between Ministers because the meeting with Laval was not expected to reach conclusions about them. ... Hoare, however, gave no indication, publicly or privately, that he was intending to embark on a serious negotiation with Laval. ... I certainly did not get the impression that any decision of importance had been taken." [Avon., pp.297-298.] Chamberlain denied the importance of the Paris conversation too and said, "I believed, ... my colleagues believed also, that he was going to stop off at Paris for a few hours on his way to Switzerland, to get the discussions with the French into such a condition that we could say to the League, 'don't prejudice the chances of a favourable issue by thrusting in a particularly provocative extra sanction at this moment.' Instead of that, a set of proposals was agreed to, and enough was allowed by the French to leak out to the press to make it impossible for us to amend the proposals, or even to defer accepting them, without throwing over our own Foreign Secretary. ..." What Halifax wrote to Chamberlain on December 26 might explain more, "the initial mistake was Sam's, in publishing his (and therefore, except at great price, *our*) assent in the Paris communiqué. And what of course explains -- but doesn't justify -- what we did was the habit of immense confidence we had rightly developed in him."[Feiling, pp.274-275.] The above quotations show that on one hand ministers understood the Cabinet conclusion differently; on the other hand, they were anxious to get rid of the blame when the Plan failed.

194 Regarding this appointment, Van. ironically commented, Eden got "a lovely Christmas box ... full of troubles." Eden said that this appointment was not welcome to his elder colleagues in the Cabinet so that he had to prevent some of them from intervening in foreign affairs. [Vansittart, p.543; Avon., pp.318-320.]

195 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N16.

196 DBFP 2nd-XV, N442.

197 On February 12, the Petroleum Committee submitted a report showing that a universal oil embargo would be fully effective within three months. [ibid, N514.] On the eve of the Munich Conference 1938, Mussolini told Hitler about "the catastrophic consequences that would have ensued for Italy at the time of the Abyssinian war, if the League of Nations had extended its sanctions to oil, even if only for a week." [Schmidt, P., *Hitler's Interpreter*, London 1951, p.112.]

198 DBFP 2nd-XV, N442 & note 4.

199 DBFP 2nd-XX, N450.

200 ibid, Nos. 454, 457.

201 DBFP 2nd-XV, N526.

202 ibid, N545.

203 ibid, Nos. 459, 463.

204 ibid, N536.

205 ibid, N526 note 1.

206 ibid, N545.

207 ibid, N545 note 3.

208 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N3 & note 10.

209 ibid, Nos. 3, 6, 11, 13, 14, 20.

210 Cab23/83 15(36).

211 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N207 note 2.

212 ibid, Nos. 197, 243.

213 ibid, Nos. 221, 223, 243.

214 ibid, N263.

215 Thorne, *The Limits of Foreign Policy*, London 1972, p.388; Carr, *International Relations between the Two World Wars (1919-1939)*, London 1965, p.228; Baer, G.W., *Test Case: Italy, Ethiopia and the League of Nations*, Stanford 1976, p.xiii; Parker, p.56.

216 Hardie, F., *The Abyssinian Crisis*, London 1974, p.3; Adamthwaite, A.P., *The Making of the Second World War*, London 1977, pp.37, 47, 52.

217 Taylor, A.J.P., *The Origins of the Second World War*, London 1972, pp.96-97, 108.

218 Eubank, *The Origins of World War II*, Illinois 1969, p.56.

219 Gehl, J. *Austria, Germany and the Anschluss 1931-1938*, London 1963, p.116 note 6 & p.117.

220 Haraszti, E., *The Invaders, Hitler Occupies the Rhineland*, Budapest 1983, pp.85-88.

221 See Chapter 3, pp. 120-121 below.

222 Avon., pp.296-297; Feiling, p.265; Schmidt, p.112.

223 Avon., p.208.

224 DBFP 2nd-XIV, Nos. 160, 276; *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918 - 1945*, C-IV, N579.

225 Feiling, pp.295-296 He had discussed this idea with Eden and won the latter's agreement. [Gibbs, N. H., *Grand Strategy* (I), London 1976, p.258 footnote.]

Chapter 3 HITLER'S FIRST COUP

I. IMMINENCE OF THE GERMAN THREAT

While the situation in the Far East and in the Mediterranean was grave, the German threat emerged in Europe. In 1933, the same year Hitler came to power, Germany announced its withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference as well as from the League. A year later, it leaked out that the German first-line aircraft would increase to 1,300 by October 1936 instead of the anticipated 1,000 by April 1939.[1] Moreover, Hitler openly breached the Versailles Treaty on March 16, 1935 by reintroducing conscription -- the German peace army would consist of 500,000 men.[2] In addition, by the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, which was signed in June, Germany was allowed to build her navy up to 35% of British naval strength.

As soon as the Franco-Russian Pact was signed on May 2, Hitler lost no time in making use of this, implying in his speech of May 21 that France had already violated Locarno.[3] However, at that time, Neurath, the German Foreign Minister, denied that the Fuhrer's speech was an indication that Germany would withdraw from Locarno owing to the Franco-Russian Pact. He said, "Such plans are far from our thoughts."[4] It appeared that until October, Germany had not yet made up its mind.[5]

It was apparent that in mid-February of 1936 Hitler began to consider what would be a right moment for the reoccupation of the Rhineland, and discussed this with his close subordinates.[6] Although he was previously in favour of taking action in the spring of 1937, he realised the postponement would make things uncertain. Since "England was in a bad state militarily, and much hampered by other problems", and "France was distracted by internal politics", he did not think that his Rhineland coup would be answered by military action. In his eyes, the Powers advocating economic sanctions seemed "whipping boys". In addition the Japanese Ambassador had twice encouraged Germany to take "some kind of action... in order to be able to pounce on" the Russian Pact.[7] Moreover, Mussolini had confirmed with Hassel, the German Ambassador, on various occasions, that Italy would not interfere, no matter how Germany reacted to the ratification of the Franco-Russian Pact. Hitler learned from the Abyssinian crisis that since the Western Powers did not defend the Covenant by

war, they would not prevent Germany from reoccupying the Rhineland either. In spite of this, Hitler was "fully aware of the risk."[8]

In another discussion with Neurath, Ribbentrop and Hassel on February 19, the Fuhrer's analysis was that

> (1) There was a danger that the demilitarized zone would gradually become a sort of inviolable institution which it would then become increasingly difficult to touch. (2) ...the Italian successes would be more likely to stiffen the British than the reverse. (3) ... it would be psychologically wrong to believe that, success once achieved, a man like Mussolini would be more inclined to compromise; on the contrary, he would really go all out. (4) Situated as were the two Fascist/National Socialist States, surrounded by democracies tainted by Bolshevism, passivity was, in the long run, no policy.

Therefore, he concluded that the Franco-Russian Pact should be used as a pretext for the Rhineland coup, which would be carried out "as soon as the ratification was approved by *the Chamber*".[9]

However, his intention met with strong disagreement from the German Foreign Office and Chiefs of Staff, the latter of whom warned that they "thought and still think the risk was too great" on the grounds that France would demand the withdrawal of German troops, failing which she might attempt to drive them out by force.[10] It is obvious that if Britain and France had stood firmly, the Fuhrer would not only have been set back in the Rhineland, but his position would also have been weakened at home or perhaps he would have been overthrown by his opposition. In that case, history might have been different. In the face of a double risk, Hitler took the final decision to occupy the zone two days after the French Chamber approved of the Pact on February 27. On March 2, in obedience to his master, Blomberg, the Reich War Minister, issued the Z-Day order for the occupation of the Rhineland with the idea in mind that if the French fought back, the Commander in Chief had the right to decide on "a hasty retreat". His executive order was given on March 5, fixing Z-Day as March 7.[11] On the same day, the decision was conveyed to the German Ambassadors in the Locarno States.[12]

The reaction of the Western Powers proved the Fuhrer's estimate correct. Although France wanted to take action, Great Britain refused to cooperate, which increased French hesitation. The Locarno Powers' failure to act brought Hitler success. This can best be seen in Hitler's own words:

> The forty-eight hours after the march into the Rhineland were the most nerve-racking in my life. ... If the French had then marched into the Rhineland, we would have had to withdraw with our tails between our legs, for the military resources at our disposal would have been wholly inadequate for even a moderate resistance.[13]

II. TWO FOUNDERS OF APPEASEMENT TOWARDS GERMANY

It was during the period of the Rhineland crisis that the policy of appeasement towards Germany was hatched. There was already a strong tendency among the chief advisers of the F.O. that was prepared to come to terms with Germany, allowing her to expand in Central and Eastern Europe.[14] Van. was the most important official in a position to sum up the proposals made by his colleagues in the F.O.[15] Having proposed appeasement toward the Japanese and Italians in the Manchurian and Abyssinian crises, he now formulated the policy that the Government ought to come to terms with Germany by paying the price, and at the same time speed up rearmament aiming at strengthening their bargaining position. After Hitler's seizure of the Rhineland, although he no longer trusted the signatures of Germany, Italy and Japan, although he criticised the Government's policy that was partly based on his advice, he did not suggest that Britain should abandon appeasement, nor did he formulate any alternative course that might be followed. In his proposal of December 31, 1936 he wrote:

> If... we utilise our assets, we have much in our favour. Friendship with this country is still the official German policy, and Hitler still puts colonial after European expansion. Indeed the colonial agitation, though widespread and tenacious, it largely artificial. Moreover, the Nazi party, if only it were wisely calculating, it not really in a position to embark on great adventure.
>
> A stage has now been reached, however, when we might be well advised to keep this door ajar in the event of complete success,... [16]

As Foreign Secretary, Eden was an ambitious and vigorous politician, having built his reputation both in Geneva and Westminster. "His youth, his charm, his good-looks all worked to his advantage." Being confident in his own knowledge of foreign affairs, he was very sensitive to any disagreement and guarded against any intervention particularly from former foreign secretaries (MacDonald, Simon and

Hoare) in the Cabinet, with whom he had a delicate relationship. However, his personal relationship with Halifax and Chamberlain (the latter before 1938) was quite harmonious.[17]

In spite of devaluing Van. in his Memoirs,[18] Eden, as documents show, relied on his Permanent-Under Secretary very much for policy-making in the F.O. Although the Chiefs of Staff warned before the crisis that loss of the demilitarised zone meant the disappearance of a weakness in German defences on their Western frontier, which would result in serious consequences for the security of Central and Eastern Europe, the Foreign Secretary insisted that the Rhineland could be used as a bargaining counter to exchange in a general settlement with Germany. During the Rhineland episode, he first used the term "appeasement" in the debates on the German occupation. Since then, appeasement "had been freely accepted into the reputable currency of political discussion."[19] After Hitler's coup, he was still under the illusion that the Fuhrer wanted a deal. While discouraging France which was inclined to take forceful action, he advised that the Government should continue to search for a general settlement with Germany by offering an Air Pact, colonies etc., and by acquiescing in German expansion in Central and Eastern Europe.

Because of Van's anti-German attitude and Eden's resignation in 1938, both of them were generally considered as anti-appeasers.[20] However, there is little evidence to support this identification. Since 1931, Van, as the Permanent Under Secretary, had been in a key position to lay down the basis for policy-making towards Japan, Italy, and now Germany. The policy he suggested was nothing but appeasement. As for Eden, despite his disagreement with Chamberlain over the methods to deal with Italy, he was completely in accord with the latter on appeasement towards Germany. What is more, since Baldwin was not very much interested in diplomacy, the conduct of foreign affairs largely depended on Eden.[21] The process of appeasement-making in this period was that it was first discussed among the chief advisers of the F.O., summed up by Van, and decided by Eden. And then Eden recommended the proposed policy to the Cabinet, which usually approved of it. It could be said that without Eden and Van, appeasement would not have been successfully formulated. Therefore, none of them was an anti-appeaser. On the contrary, they were arch-appeasers, who were the most important founders of appeasement, particularly

towards Germany. Of the two, Eden was, at ministerial level, a more influential policy-maker who induced the Government to choose appeasement in the mid-1930s. It was a futile effort for him to disguise himself in his memoir as a hero, "facing the dictators".

III. BEFORE THE CRISIS: PREPARING FOR BARGAINING

As early as the autumn of 1933, the British policy-makers started to worry about "German menace" together with their consideration of Far Eastern policy. Based on the first DRC report of 1934, the Cabinet decided to continue appeasing Japan so as to concentrate on Europe.[22] However, although they did not figure out how to concentrate, there was some discernible clues to be seen in their proposals. Van released in his memo of April 7, 1934, "There is probably no *immediate* danger. ... We have time, though not too much time, to make defensive preparations." Personally he doubted "whether anything much would be gained by a weakening of Hitler -- on the contrary."[23] Chamberlain told his colleagues at the beginning of September, when they were considering a bilateral pact with Japan, that "all our evidence indicates that it would be easier and simpler to come to an agreement with Japan than with Germany."[24] However, at that time, it seemed that they believed, as Eden told Mussolini in their interview of February 28, 1934 that the Germans "appeared genuinely to desire peace in order to push on with the fifteen years' internal programme".[25]

It was one year before the Rhineland coup that the Western Powers had been suspicious of Hitler's intention of expansion. Being more sensitive, the French press had suspected since Hitler's speech of May 21, 1935 that Germany would abandon the Locarno Pact by using the ratification of the Franco-Russian Pact.[26] On the British side, having carefully compared the speeches given by the German leaders from May 1934 to January 1936, Eden concluded that "after the decree of March 1935 reintroducing Conscription the German leaders began to speak somewhat differently." Hitler's words "scarcely leave us room to doubt that the rearmament of Germany is not being carried out for nothing or without a purpose."[27]

In November of 1935, Phipps, the British Ambassador in Berlin, warned the Government that German ambitious attempts could "only end in war and in a war

waged by Germany", and "the present Ethiopian embroglio is mere child's play compared to the problem that will in some not very distant future confront His Majesty's Government."[28] According to his observation, German expansion would be in a colony and in Eastern Europe, but Hitler would not commit himself definitely until the Abyssinian problem was settled. Since "colonial expansion will not necessarily prevent subsequent efforts for expansion in the East", he opposed offering back to Germany her former colonies. While emphasising the importance of speed in British rearmament, he held that the best way to prevent Hitler coming to terms with Russia was for Britain to come to terms with Germany.[29]

The Ambassador's warning was received with great attention.[30] The majority of the senior officials in the F.O. overwhelmingly advocated a policy of searching for settlement with Germany, which was best represented by the joint memo of Sargent and Wigram on the 21st. These two advisers laid down the three policy alternatives: the first was "a policy of drift" that the Government might simply allow the situation to develop and wait to see whether the Western Powers would come to some compromise with Germany or "keep the German claims in bounds" by strength. A second policy was "that of the encirclement of Germany", i.e. Britain, as the central force, might form a counter block to German expansion by uniting herself with France, Russia, Belgium, Italy and countries in Eastern Europe such as Czechoslovakia, Roumania, Poland, Austria, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Hungary. However, they rejected the above alternatives on the grounds that these courses were "avowedly policies of negation and despair." In particular, it was doubtful in their view that the encirclement of Germany would be successful from the military point of view. What they suggested, however, was the third policy of "coming to terms with Germany" which was, they said, "the only constructive policy open to Europe":

> The fundamental idea is of course that the ex-Allied Powers should come to terms with Germany in order to remove grievances by friendly arrangement and by the process of give and take, before Germany once again takes the law into her own hands.

This was the basic theory for appeasement towards Germany. They went on to argue why they must pursue this appeasement: since Great Britain had no "practical means entirely to counter German expansionist policy" in Central and Easter Europe, it would be unwise to devise a policy "which we cannot enforce", i.e. protecting the

countries in this region from German invasion. By coming to terms with Germany, they "might hope to keep within reasonable bounds her Eastern and Central European policy." Not only did they not rule out the possibility of making concessions to Germany on the colonial issue, but they also considered that "the strength and weakness of the German economic position" could be used in coming to terms with Germany. As for the Rhineland, although they realised that "defensively also it undoubtedly constitutes a definite and important counterweight against Germany and a check on any plans which she may entertain in Central and Eastern Europe", they suggested,

> an early attempt to come to terms with Germany can only work towards rendering it less likely that this dangerous question -- if ... it is raised by Germany, will be raised in an aggressive and threatening manner.

However, they confessed that their policy would "undoubtedly involve the sacrifice of certain vested interests and the abandonment of many a point of national prestige." But they thought that Britain as well as Europe would benefit from the success of adopting this course. Therefore, they urged,

> we lost one opportunity after another of coming to terms with Germany in the past, when conditions were far more favourable than they are at present. ...the longer we wait the more probable it becomes that German demands, at present fluid, will have become crystallised into certain definite forms which will not allow of any compromise or bargaining.[31]

However, Mr L. Collier, Counsellor at the F. O., had a different view that the Government

> should consider the grounds for attempting no general settlement with Germany in the present circumstances.

He pointed out that German ambition in Central and Eastern Europe would meet with firm resistance from Eastern European countries, and to let the Germans expand there was "even worse than giving Mussolini a free hand in Abyssinia." He also criticised the authors of the above Memorandum for their conciliatory attitude towards the German demand for colonies. He advised:

> It is therefore better to let sleeping dogs lie, and... not to discourage those Powers who are building barriers against the 'racial doctrine' by means of Pacts and alliances. ...

> that our only wise and safe course is to continue that policy by discussing specific matters such as the Air Pact with Germany, but firmly refusing to be drawn into any discussion either on the Colonial claims, ... or on German ambitions in Eastern Europe. Above all, I would urge that there should be no attempt to tinker with the Covenant of the League of Nations, in order to provide the Nazi regime in Germany with facilities for raising the question of territorial revision at the expense of other Powers, including ourselves.[32]

His proposal was called "a combination" of a policy of encirclement and a policy of drift, stressing on the latter, however, he failed to offer a plan as to how to organise "barriers" to deter German expansion.

Having examined these different views "in great detail", Van. found them very interesting. His anti-German attitude did not bother him at all when he outlined the basis for appeasement towards Germany. As for the above proposals, he said he stood somewhat between the two, but in fact he took the proposal of Sargent and Wigram as a line of policy-making, whereas Collier's suggestion with some anti-appeasement characteristics had been put aside in the first stage of policy-making in the F.O. In his memo of December 1, Van decided to recommend to the Cabinet the course of appeasement as the future Government's policy towards Germany,

> You can only come to terms with Germany at a price. Even so I would be glad to come to terms with Germany. I reject of course the policy of drift; but we must be careful not to describe or consider as a policy of encirclement anything that puts us in a stronger bargaining position.

On the other hand,

> We ought not to try a bargain with Germany until we have at least made a beginning on the requirements of the new D.R.C. report ... We need not of course wait till the D.R.C. requirements are completed. That would take far too long... If we try, we must be prepared for possible failure; and for that we must be already strong or running into strength.

Van. hoped that he would have an opportunity to discuss those matters with Eden and Hoare. In fact, all these documents had already been drawn Hoare's attention to such an extent that he hoped to take them away to read during his holiday in early December.[33]

Meanwhile, Germany had become more and more lukewarm towards the idea of negotiating with the Western Powers.[34] In the interview of December 13, although

Phipps was at pains to explain that the Anglo-German Air Pact should be contemplated, Hitler maintained "the strongest objection". He condemned the Franco-Russian Pact in a "violent outburst" and said that he regretted that he had failed to reoccupy the Rhineland on March 16 the previous year. Neurath also emphasised that the air pact should be accompanied by "the abandonment of the demilitarized zone". As to the colonial problem, the Fuhrer expressed the view that "he was only demanding the return of what really and truly was Germany's property."[35]

In his despatch, Phipps warned the F. O., "I fear that the zone will be re-occupied whenever a favourable excuse presents itself."[36] The Ambassador's reports met with general agreement. Eden, who was now Foreign Secretary, thought them "a valuable and penetrating analysis, admirably timed".[37] Having carefully considered those reports, Wigram pointed out in his memo of December 16,

> It now seems most unlikely that any air negotiation could be carried through without the question of the demilitarised zone being raised. ... But no consideration has been given to the matter: nor, I imagine, has anyone, either in Paris or in London, any clear idea as to what attitude ought to be taken if we were suddenly presented (...) with a serious infringement.[38]

He analysed in another memo a month later, after talking with M. de Margerie, First Secretary in the French Embassy in London:

> Not that I think the French will fight for the zone;...
>
> Personally, I find it difficult to believe that our interests would not best be served by the maintenance of the zone. But I regard its maintenance over anything but a very restricted future as quite impracticable; and therefore ... what all of us had best be thinking about now is the means of securing its peaceful disappearance.
>
> If we could get some little benefit in return for its disappearance, I believe we would be wise to take it.[39]

With Van.'s agreement, Sargent also urged "to lose no time in getting clear in our own minds what we want and what we are prepared to do" and that the C.I.D. should speedily submit their reports, which had been required by Eden in early January, as to the value of the zone from the military and air points of view.[40]

In late January, he and Mr Collier had an inter-departmental meeting with representatives of the Air Ministry and War Office, and they came to the general agreement that "an Air Pact would be valuable from the political rather than the military point of view" and it might provide "a useful bargaining counter", e.g. an Air Pact might be obtained from Germany in return for the abolition of the zone.[41] Their conclusion was completely in accordance with the Foreign Secretary's.[42]

Although he was disturbed by a "doubtful factor in Germany's plans for the future", Eden, depending on the observations of the British Ambassadors in Berlin from 1933 to 1935, suggested to the Cabinet in his memo of January 17,

> The first ... is that it is vital to hasten and complete our own rearmament. ... My second conclusion is that, ... it will be well to consider whether it is still possible to come to some modus vivendi ... with Hitler's Germany ...[43]

When the Cabinet considered his memo on the 29th, he informed the Ministers that, according to his understanding, France was unlikely to take action "except where her own frontier was in danger". In addition, the Ministers had a discussion on the Report of January 17 by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, in which, their attention was drawn to the formidable situation in the Far East and the possible "combination of Germany and Japan." The military experts quoted the observation in the third Report of the DRC dated November 21, 1935,

> We consider it to be a cardinal requirement of our national and imperial security that our foreign policy should be so conducted as to avoid the possible development of a situation in which we might be confronted simultaneously with the hostility, open or veiled, of Japan in the Far East, Germany in the West, and any Power on the main line of communication between the two. So far as Japan is concerned, ... we emphasised strongly the importance of an ultimate policy of accommodation and neighbourliness with that country. Recent events accentuate the desirability of that policy, difficult though it may be to carry out.

The Chief of Staff strongly echoed the DRC conclusion of making every effort to improve Anglo-Japanese relations and suggested that "only Anglo-Japanese friendship seems likely to deter Japan from entering into closer relations with Germany." In the course of a short discussion, the First Lord of the Admiralty pointed out that

> The real danger was lest Germany and Japan should be driven together. ... If Germany were to move in Eastern Europe there was the danger that Japan might move in the Far East.

He had informed the French that the British Government thought

> that such a move on the part of Japan would be of greater concern to this country with its vast interests in the Far East than German action in Eastern Europe.

In the end, in the face of the Italian danger in the Mediterranean and the German menace in Europe, the Cabinet instructed the F.O. and the Chiefs of Staff to discuss the possibility of improving Anglo-Japanese relations further. As for policy towards Germany, the Ministers agreed that the question should be taken up as soon as Eden was ready.[44]

In the mean time, the shape of the policy had been developing in the hands of Van., Sargent and the Department.[45] In this process, both Van. and Eden often consulted Phipps.[46] On February 3, Van. completed his memo, which was an all-sided analysis of the German problem.

Absorbing the main ideas from the proposals of Sargent, Wigram and Phipps, Van. once again emphasised the necessity of coming to terms with Germany on the grounds that since the Versailles system had broken down something must be put in its place to avoid "consequent tension". In other words, appeasement would replace Versailles as a new basis for international affairs. Not only did he criticise those "who feel their very existence dependent on the uncompromising defence of an inelastic *status quo*", but he also thought that a waiting policy was dangerous, on the grounds that it was an advantage to Germany, because an armed Germany, seeking the satisfaction of its ambitions, would choose her own time for asserting each of her claims, and Europe would be forced to deal with each one separately. Therefore he proposed that the British Government should seek for a broad basis for negotiations that "must not be a temporary and local *détente* but a lasting and comprehensive settlement." He went on:

> these changes should be made, if possible, as part of an agreed settlement and not as a result of demands formulated under the threat of military pressure.

> this settlement must take the form of a bargain. A bargain can only be achieved at a price. ... we have got to pay for it.

He told the British leaders that Germany aimed at the demilitarisation of the Rhineland, expansion in Central and Eastern Europe, and return of the colonies, etc. He estimated that

> the demilitarised Rhineland is not likely to persist indefinitely; ... an early attempt to come to terms with Germany can only render it less likely that this dangerous question will be thrust forward in an aggressive and dangerous manner.

As to German expansion in Europe, although he was opposed to making "any statements of renunciation in Central Europe", he suggested that "the problem may be solved by the creation and recognition of some kind of 'special area' for German economic expansion in Central Europe". In addition to the possibility of moderating and canalising Germany's non-military influence in Central and Eastern Europe, "an Anglo-French settlement with Germany would be a more effective guarantee against the dangers of Russo-German co-operation".

In the light of the fact that the British Government was not prepared to consider or discuss the cession of the colonies to Germany, he thought that in this case "there is no prospect of reaching any real agreement with Germany." He proposed that "we could meet the German claim by the retrocession of some or all of the former German colonies" as part of a general settlement.[47]

Eden recommended Van.'s memo to the Cabinet as "the outcome of prolonged and anxious study in the Foreign Office of the situation". A week later, in his paper attached with Van.'s memo, Eden approached the necessity of appeasement from another angle as he analysed,

> The poverty of Nazi Germany, measured in the country's dwindling export trade and increase of unemployment, may be expected to have the same effect as in Italy, and to encourage a Dictator to launch his people on some foreign venture as the only means that remain to him to distract their attention from the failure of his policy at home.

One of his suggestions for avoiding this consequence was to adopt measures of economic appeasement:

> Our purpose being to avoid war, it should follow that we should be wise to do everything in our power to assist Germany's economic recovery, thereby easing the strain upon the German rulers, and making an outbreak less likely.

He made himself clear,

> I am in favour of making some attempt to come to terms with Germany... We should be prepared to make concessions to Germany, ... but these concessions must only be offered as part of a final settlement which includes some further arms limitation and Germany's return to the League.

What is more, he did not stop at the point of only formulating the basis for appeasement, but he went further to urge the Government to examine "what it is possible to offer to Germany" as "the first step" to carry out appeasement.[48] According to his suggestion, Baldwin appointed a Committee on February 14 to consider policy towards Germany, consisting of himself, MacDonald, Chamberlain, Eden, Halifax, and three other Ministers, all of whom would hold a meeting on the 17th.[49]

For this Committee meeting, Mr Sargent prepared the memo on the Rhineland, for the Foreign Secretary, who admired it as "an excellent statement and exactly what was needed".[50] In the document, Eden conveyed the view of Chiefs of Staff about the value of the Rhineland,[51]

> the Zone has, even in the air, a certain value; whilst as regards land warfare it is a weakness and thus a disadvantage to Germany in the event of her becoming engaged in war in Central or Eastern Europe. ... At present France, by invading the Zone, could with ease come to their assistance if attacked, but once the Zone is fortified France will find it much more difficult to launch a direct land attack on Germany, and the value of the French alliances will be proportionately reduced... In this way the disappearance of the Demilitarized Zone will not merely change local military values, but is likely to lead to far-reaching political repercussions of a kind which will further weaken France's influence in Eastern and Central Europe, leaving a gap which may eventually be filled either by Germany or by Russia.

But this correct conclusion did not persuade the Foreign Secretary from abandoning the idea of bargaining, and he advised that,

> taking one thing with another, it seems undesirable to adopt an attitude where we would either have to fight for the Zone or abandon it in the face of a German reoccupation. It would be preferable for Great Britain and France to enter betimes into negotiations with the German Government for the surrender on conditions of our rights in the Zone while such surrender still has got a bargaining value.[52]

On the 17th, the Committee members held their first meeting to discuss possible concessions to Germany, for example, the return of one or more of the former German Colonies, an agreement on raw materials, and the abandonment of the demilitarised zone. Since the German economic crisis might result in the Nazi Government attempting a foreign adventure as a means of distracting attention, they thought it was "an additional reason for coming to terms quickly".

In the course of discussion, supported by Simon, Eden suggested that a short-term policy towards Germany would be required first; whereas Halifax advised that "it would be necessary first to go some way towards clearing our minds on long-term policy." Differing from Eden, who thought it no use discussing an Air pact while the Abyssinian war lasted, MacDonald thought

> we should choose the Air Pact as our opening. ... the colonial raw materials suggestion would be a new opening,... We must be prepared to pay a heavy price, if we were to buy Germany's return to Geneva...

But Chamberlain agreed with Eden's view on the colonial question that "the transfer of Tanganyika would be worth while if a really permanent settlement could be achieved." However, their divergence was not fundamental because it focused merely on how to appease Hitler rather than whether they should abandon appeasement. In the end, the Committee agreed to give further consideration when the additional information had been prepared.[53]

After the meeting, Eden instructed Phipps to use the Air Pact as the means of the first move towards Germany. If Hitler raised the issue of the Zone, Phipps should reply that Britain would also like to talk about the situation in Central and Eastern Europe, and armament limitations.[54]

Early in March, the F. O. communicated with the French and Belgian Governments on their attitude towards the German problem. M. Flandin, the French Foreign Minister, informed the British Government that if Germany reoccupied the Rhineland, France would consider taking "any preparatory measures including measures of a military character"; but she would not act alone. In addition, Flandin had reason to believe that "Germany intends to reoccupy the zone in the very near future."[55]

In the Cabinet meeting on March 5 -- the last meeting before Hitler's seizure of the Rhineland, Eden told his colleagues that if Germany violated the demilitarised

zone, "the French Government would not proceed to isolated action, and would only act in agreement with the co-signatories of Locarno whom they would consult." Considering German immediate violation of Versailles unlikely, the Ministers discussed what would be the effect on other signatories if Germany denounced Locarno, using as an excuse the ratification of the Russian Pact.[56] They thought that the possible reoccupation of the Zone by Germany "was directed against all the signatories of the Treaty other than the aggressor." Eden, MacDonald and Simon all agreed to declare that at any rate, "we were not absolved from our obligations." However, MacDonald added, "we should avoid being driven back on the legal issue and keep the road open for diplomatic arrangement." With others' agreement, both Baldwin and Chamberlain pointed out that "neither France nor England was really in a position to take effective military action." Based on Eden's suggestion, the Cabinet concluded that the way to get round the difficulty was to take up the question of an Air Pact with Germany. They also authorised Eden to discuss with the French Prime Minister what to do in the changed situation.[57]

Next day, Eden called in the German Ambassador and asked him to refer again to Hitler "the possibility of opening of serious discussion on the Air Pact" between the Locarno Powers. But the Ambassador confined himself "mainly to listening to Eden's remarks," and told the Foreign Secretary that there would be "an important declaration" of the Fuhrer to be delivered on the next morning.[58] In fact, Eden had learned from Phipps on the same day that "some action is on the point of being taken by the German Government in regard to Locarno."[59]

IV. DURING THE CRISIS: THE BARGAIN LOST

At noon on March 7, Hitler addressed the Reichstag, announcing reoccupation of the Rhineland together with the Declaration, in which he appealed for a demilitarisation on both sides of the Rhine Frontier, a twenty-five-year non-aggression pact between Germany, France and Belgium, a similar pact between Germany and Eastern European Powers and an air pact etc.[60]

The German action raised confusion and conflicting views from public opinion. There were "many gratifying indications of sympathy for the German point of view, and in general, of a tendency towards objective assessment and calm reflection" in the

Press. On the other hand, "sharp criticism" of German violation was to be found in many newspapers.[61] *The Times*, the *Observer*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express* etc. were enthusiastic about Hitler's peace offer, and the *Observer* appealed for Britain to consider Hitler's proposals "in a spirit of sympathy and goodwill". The *Daily Express* put forward a question: "The Germans have reoccupied the Rhineland. What does that mean to **US**? ... The question **WILL BRITAIN BE INVOLVED IN WAR**? The answer is **NO**." The *Manchester Guardian*, however, released more controversy: although its leader articles were pro-German, Mr F. A. Voigt, its leader writer, held a hard line. Differing from his own paper, he wrote on March 9, that unless Britain supported the French in opposing reoccupation, "the Germans will have attained what Hitler has in his book *Main Kampf* declared to be one of the chief aims of German foreign policy-- namely, 'the possibility of achieving the overthrow of France' " In addition, the *Daily Telegraph* appealed that Britain should meet Hitler's challenge and expose his hypocritical peace offer:

> Hitler's action and his speech have created a new and most difficult situation in Europe, and on the British Government's next step -- carefully considered and, whatever it may be, we hope it will be firm and unmistakable -- the course of future events must largely depend.[62]

The House, however, was "more critical and nervous" than the Press. Harold Nicolson described, "General mood of the House is one of fear. Anything to keep out of war." In mid-March, an M. P. told the German Ambassador, "A pro-French policy hasn't a hope. The whole country is pro-German."[63] Sir Arthur Sinclair, the leader of the Liberal Party, gave a speech on March 9:

> Let us remember that we, the States Members of the League, for too long failed to fulfil one of our obligations, our obligation to disarm. For too long we refused to recognise the equality of Germany ... Nor, while we must condemn any violation of treaties, can we regard the occupation of German territory by German troops as so clearly indefensible, as an aggression against the territory of a member of the League. Let us then give calm and dispassionate study to these detailed constructive proposals for the removal of Germany's grievances and for securing European peace which Germany has at last tabled.[64]

On the other hand, "criticism of the German action is very marked" as the German Ambassador in London reported to Berlin,

> Indignation at Germany's alleged treaty violation is profound. This is adversely influencing the effect made by the German proposals, since

> doubts are felt as to the value of any future German promises and, indeed, as to whether there is any point in making fresh agreements with Germany.[65]

The House had already known that "Hitler gambled on this coup" against the warnings of the German Foreign Office and Chiefs of Staff. It was widely accepted even by the MPs, who did not agree with intervention, that if Britain and France acted together, Germany had no chance of resistance, and that if war occurred, the Western Powers would win.[66]

On the 12th, a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Commons took place. Sir Austen (the Chair) strongly recommended that "Britain was in duty bound to support France unreservedly." If France took immediate coercive measures against Germany, Britain should aid France with full force. He was supported by Mr. Churchill, who warned the House later about the grave consequences that would be caused by the reoccupation of the Rhineland:

> The violation of the Rhineland is serious because of the menace to which it exposes Holland, Belgium and France. ... *It will be a barrier across Germany's front door which will leave her free to sally out eastwards and southwards by the other doors.*
>
> That is to us a less direct danger, but it is a more imminent danger. ... the whole aspect of middle Europe is changed.

That day, these two "influential personages succeeded by their joint action in winning over to their side about three-quarters of the members of the Committee present".[67] The German Ambassador assumed that if the Foreign Secretary had been Sir Austen instead of Eden, and the Minister for Defence had been Churchill instead of Inskip, "Britain would cooperate, would have yielded to the impulse to take ultimative and, possibly, forcible action against Germany."[68]

This evidence is fatal to the appeasers' repeated argument, voiced by Eden, that "there is little dispute that Hitler should have been called to order, if need be forcibly, at his first breach of an accepted international engagement. But nobody was prepared to do it, in this country literally nobody."[69] The fact was that in March 1936 there was not only favourable condition for the British Government to take joint action with the French so as to check Hitler, but also there existed a loud voice within and outside of the House to press them do so.

However, critical opinion did not influence the Government's line at all. On the contrary, the Government employed various methods to "mould" public opinion. For example, in February 1935, Rex Leeper, Head of the News Department in the F.O., suggested, "We really must find some way of guiding the BBC's foreign comment more than we do." During the Rhineland episode (on March 30, 1936), a special Cabinet Committee investigated the BBC's programmes on European affairs and decided to "ask the BBC to refrain from arranging for independent expressions of views on the situation." The Government successfully put censorship on the BBC, which has to rely on them for the renewal of its Charter and licence. Therefore, British radio was, as an American commentator observed, a "constant flow of reports from the government departments" tantamount to "gentle propaganda in favour of things as they are."[70] In the House Eden misled the audience on March 9 by saying, "There is, ... no reason to suppose that the present German action implies a threat of hostilities".[71]

Historical fact has proved that the policy-makers did not consult the public at all when they worked on policy-making because policy towards Germany had been already formulated before the public had a voice on it. They would not change their policy even though the outside opinion demanded they should face the German challenge.

On the same day (March 7) that he learned of Hitler's coup against the Rhineland, Eden drove down to Chequers to discuss the dangerous situation with Baldwin. He reported to the Prime Minister that both France and Belgium would wish to condemn Germany for a breach of the Versailles Treaty and that the former might not take military action immediately but would lay the case before the Council, asking for an early meeting of the Locarno Powers. Baldwin "said little". However, based on Eden's view, he set the tone for policy-making, saying that "there would be no support in Britain for any military action by the French". Eden agreed. The basis for foreign policy was thus settled between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary.[72]

As soon as he returned to the F. O., Eden received the report from Clerk, the British Ambassador in Paris, which confirmed his assumption above.[73] In addition,

the Belgians held similar views as the French, showing that they would follow the lead of the British Government.[74] Italy, however, gave no indication.[75]

Based on the information from his Ambassadors, Eden set down his views for the Cabinet on the 8th,

> by reoccupying the Rhineland he (Hitler -- Author) has deprived us of the possibility of making to him a concession which might otherwise have been a useful bargaining counter in our hands in the general negotiations with Germany... Such negotiations are now inevitable, but we shall enter them at a disadvantage, for we have lost the bargaining counter...

He warned his colleagues, "We must be prepared for him to repudiate any treaty even if freely negotiated"; on the other hand he believed that

> it is in our interest to conclude with her (Germany -- Author) as far-reaching and enduring a settlement as possible whilst Herr Hitler is still in the mood to do so.

For a possible solution, he suggested entering into negotiations with Germany with the object of

> (a) establishing a new 'Locarno' on the lines suggested by Herr Hitler; (b) concluding an air pact on the lines suggested by us; (c) bringing about some sort of settlement in Eastern and Central Europe (...) on the basis of the bilateral non-aggression pacts offered by Herr Hitler; (d) arranging for Germany's unconditional return to the League.

In order to achieve those purposes, he thought that "the essential thing will be to induce or cajole France to accept this mandate." Therefore, they "must discourage any military action by France against Germany."[76]

When he consulted Van., the latter "approved it enthusiastically", but suggested that "our guarantee was to France and Belgium alone".[77] Next day, the Cabinet, based on Van.'s suggestion, redrafted the last paragraph of Eden's memo and inserted it into a statement, which Eden was authorised to give in the House on the same evening. It says,

> In case there should be any misunderstanding about our position as a signatory of the Locarno Treaty, His Majesty's Government think it necessary to say that, should there take place ... any actual attack upon France or Belgium which would constitute a violation of Article 2 of Locarno, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, notwithstanding the German repudiation of the Treaty, would regard themselves as in honour bound to come, in the manner provided in the Treaty, to the assistance of the country attacked.[78]

After the Parliamentary debate, Eden, with Halifax, went to Paris for the meeting of the Locarno Powers without Germany.[79] In their conversations on the 10th, Flandin told Eden that France had brought the case to the Council of the League and that, once the Council declared German action as a breach of treaty, the French Government would use "all their moral and material resources (including military, naval and air forces) in order to repress what they regarded as an attempt upon international peace." The French would not pursue negotiation with Germany unless "international law had been re-established in its full value". He made the stand point quite clear that the French Government stressed that the Locarno Powers must take up "a common position at the Council", and he even contemplated the Locarno Powers alone taking military action. The Belgians held a similar position. Discouraging the French by implication of the British different stand point, Eden tried to convince his Locarno partners that this was an opportunity of "reaching a settlement with Germany", several of which, in his opinion, "had been missed" before.[80] Eden and Halifax insisted that their policy of "trying for a negotiation was still a right one" because "the alternative proposed by the French Government for forcing the Germans out of the Rhineland would not produce a satisfactory settlement."[81]

Next evening, right after their return to London , Baldwin called a special Cabinet meeting to contemplate how best to proceed. Eden reported to his colleagues of the French and Belgians' firm stand point, namely, that if Germany refused to withdraw from the Rhineland, they would proceed to military measures and asked Britain to do the same. He foresaw that "we should be in an impossible position if we refused." Halifax said that "the French and Belgians sincerely believed that the Germans would not fight if they took action." As to what proposal the Government should adopt, Eden suggested informing the German Ambassador immediately that despite the grave situation created by the German action, the British Government were still "anxious to obtain a peaceful settlement". But they needed Hitler to make some reasonable contribution, e.g. he should state "that he wanted to negotiate a series of new pacts as a basis for peace in Europe, and would, as a proof of his intentions, withdraw all his forces from the Rhineland over and above the troops necessary for a symbolic occupation." In addition, Hitler would not "build fortifications in the

demilitarised zone." The problem was, as some Ministers pointed out, that the French and Belgians "might object to it" if they were informed. It was generally accepted that

> it was worth taking almost any risk in order to escape from that situation. Admittedly the suggestion of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs involved some risks from the point of view of the attitude of Germany on the one hand, and France and Belgium on the other, but we could hardly be left in a more embarrassing position than we were in already.

They agreed that they would calm the French down by telling the latter that due to the British military disadvantage and public opinion, the Government could not take any military action. Baldwin thought that it seemed "very unfriendly" of the French "to put us in the present dilemma." He emphasised that

> it would be necessary to point out to the French that the action they proposed would not result only in letting loose another great war in Europe. They might succeed in crushing Germany with the aid of Russia, but it would probably only result in Germany going Bolshevik.

In the course of discussion, there was a suggestion of imposing financial and economic sanctions against Germany. But Eden rejected this by saying that the "proposal had been for the imposition of sanctions by successive stages culminating in military action." The Cabinet finally came to the conclusion that Eden should tell the German Ambassador about the British proposal and "do it well.".[82]

That very evening, without informing the French, Eden told Hoesch, the German Ambassador about the British proposal, but the latter replied on the following day that Hitler agreed only not to increase troops, not to alter their geographical position.[83]

On the night of March 11, Flandin arrived in London for the Locarno conversations. In the following days, apart from official meetings, he had a series of private communication with influential British statesmen and addressed the House, aiming at gaining British support. His subject was summed up as follows:

> If England will act now she can lead Europe. ... It is your last chance. If you do not stop Germany now, all is over. France cannot guarantee Czechoslovakia any more because that will become geographically impossible. ... If you do not stop Germany by force to-day, war is inevitable, even if you make a temporary friendship with Germany.[84]

Having heard his exhortations, Churchill urged him to see Baldwin. On the 12th, Flandin had interviews separately with Baldwin and Chamberlain. He told the British Prime Minister that

> France had no wish to drag Great Britain into war; she asked for no practical aid, and she would herself undertake what would be a simple police operation, as, according to French information, the German troops in the Rhineland had orders to withdraw if opposed in a forcible manner.

But Baldwin turned down his suggestion by saying, "You may be right, but if there is even one chance in a hundred that war would follow from your police operation, I have not the right to commit England."[85] Chamberlain did not do anything more to encourage the French Foreign Minister either according to his diary of March 12:

> talked to Flandin, emphasising that public opinion would not support us in sanctions of any kind. His view is that if a firm front is maintained Germany will yield without war. We cannot accept this as a reliable estimate of a mad dictator's reaction.[86]

At the official meetings, Flandin told Eden again of the French stand point. In reply, Eden asserted that

> We were convinced that it would not be possible to secure a German withdrawal from the Rhineland, and that to make an attempt to do so was to court certain failure and a grave risk of war. In these circumstances was it not better to see whether there were not some other way out of our present difficulty?

He warned his French partners:

> we feared that were we to do this our two projects might be found to diverge at almost every point. This would be a misfortune.[87]

Since all official and private conversations led nowhere, Flandin was "in a very depressed mood" and felt that "his mission to London had been a failure."[88]

Based on the latest conversations of the Locarno Powers, Eden described the resolution in his memo for the Cabinet dated March 15, which included 1) condemnation of Germany's action; 2) invitation to France and Germany to refer to the Hague Court the question of the compatibility of the Franco-Soviet Pact with Locarno; 3) stationing of an international force, including British troops, on either side of the frontiers between France, Belgium and Germany.[89]

Next day, the Cabinet, after discussion, approved his proposal and authorised him to communicate with the French.[90] Chamberlain also reported on another talk with Flandin. Having heard his report, Baldwin said that he was strongly in favour of sending the British troops to form part of an international force in the Rhineland.[91]

However, when the Ministers met on the evening of March 18, they found the problems far from being solved. Eden summed up the difficulties occurring in the Locarno Powers' conversation the same day: 1) as to an International Force on both sides of the frontier, Flandin could accept either a Franco-Italian force in France, or an International Force in the Zone only; 2) the French and Belgian Governments wished the British Government to address a letter to them as to the steps which the British would take, including economic, financial and military sanctions, in the event of Germany's refusal to accept the terms; 3) as to laying the case before the Hague Court, they insisted that if the judgement went against France, the Franco-Soviet Pact must be annulled; but in the event of it going against Germany, Locarno must come into force; 4) they insisted that military talks should take place between Britain, France and Belgium. In the course of discussion, Eden suggested that "the situation would be eased if we could agree to military conversations", relating to the obligations of the Powers concerned under the Locarno Treaty if the negotiations with the Germans failed. But some Ministers reminded the Cabinet "that military conversations on that basis would be very unacceptable to public opinion in this country which was strongly opposed to any forcible action to compel the Germans to evacuate the Demilitarised Zone." They argued that they "were not in a position to give effective military support in any such operation as the French were well aware." They believed that "there was no question of immediate action as contemplated in the Treaty since the time for that had already passed." The general tenor of the Cabinet's views on the points of difference came to be as follows:

> (a) The Lord Privy Seal's proposal for the stationing of an International Force, including British troops, in the Demilitarised Zone and for British and Italian forces on the French side of the frontier, was welcomed.
> (b) The proposed letter to the French and Belgian Governments as to our action in the event of Germany's refusal to accept the terms offered to her was rejected ...
> (c) The difficulty as to the attitude of the French and Belgian Government to the suggestion that Germany should go to the Hague Court had been solved by M. Van. Zeeland's (the Belgian

Prime Minister -- Author) latest communication.[92]
(d) Military conversations must be strictly limited to mutual arrangements for defence in the event of German aggression against France or Belgium...[93]

After the Cabinet meeting, the Locarno Ministers resumed their difficult conversation again from 10:00 that evening until 2:00 next morning, when they finally come to an agreement, which included the stationing of an international force in the Rhineland; asking the German Government to lay their case before the Hague Court and to refrain from fortifying the Zone during the period of negotiations.[94] When Eden informed Ribbentrop, the German Delegate to the Locarno meeting about these Resolutions, the latter answered at once that it seemed to him that certain points of the proposals were apparently "unacceptable". Eden was at pains to make plain to him how difficult it had been to persuade the French to agree to a kind of temporary compromise solution, and urged the German Government "to make some contribution on their side", and emphasised the importance of not returning a flat negative to the proposals.[95]

Following the preliminary note of March 24,[96] Hitler's answer was finally announced on March 31, in which he made his own "contribution to the reconstruction of a new Europe" by refusing all three requirements of the Locarno Powers and by offering a nineteen-point "peace plan".[97]

Right after receiving this on April 1, the Cabinet members got together to discuss the matter. They thought that "what we wanted first was to obtain some action of a re-assuring character by Germany to restore confidence in some degree." But the German memo did not meet the suggestions by the Locarno Powers in the Resolution of March 19. On the other hand, they agreed that "the French Government must not be given any encouragement by the attitude of the British Press to reject the proposals altogether" because some points of Hitler's plan "were interesting".[98]

On the French side, the French Government regarded the German reply as a refusal to the Resolution of March 19, and showed no confidence in the Hitler peace plan.[99] M. van. Zeeland, the Belgian Prime Minister also suggested that the Locarno Powers meeting and staff talks should be resumed as soon as possible.[100] In his telegram from Paris, Eden reported to his colleagues about the Locarno Powers conversation:

> French Government will concentrate on securing our support for refusal to allow zone to be fortified. They may well ask us to join in making clear to German Government that if demand is refused sanctions by Locarno Powers will follow.

In the course of discussion, the Ministers felt that "the essence of sanctions was that they must be collective and effective. Neither of these conditions would apply to sanctions imposed as proposed by the French." So they suggested that Eden should tell the French "that sanctions could not be imposed by the Locarno Powers". They decided,

> if the question of the French refusal to allow the Demilitarised Zone to be fortified were raised, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would be justified in refusing to admit that conciliation had failed. ... if and when the point was reached where conciliation had failed... our first action would be consultation with the French and Belgian Governments as to the steps to be taken to meet the new situation.

On that very evening, Halifax left for Paris, bringing this Cabinet conclusion to Eden.[101] At the same time, the Cabinet approved a proposal that the General Staff conversations between Britain, France and Belgium should open on April 15.[102]

When Halifax joined Eden, the two Ministers, following the line above, "strongly resisted the French view" that the attempt at conciliation had failed and that it was time to begin the study of sanctions. Taking advantage of the indication that the French were looking for "compensation" for the fortification of the Rhineland, they pointed out that

> the German proposals were far from clear on a number of points; that some of those points, if explained in a satisfactory way, might give the French the very 'compensation' they were looking for; and that therefore the first step was to clear up these doubtful points with the Germans.

They promised to get into touch with the Germans to clear up these points. At last the French yielded.[103]

V. AFTERMATH: THE ILLUSION OF SEARCHING FOR A SETTLEMENT

As early as after his interviewing of the German Ambassador on March 11,[104] Eden realised that "we should not get much further in the vital conversation". Halifax

and Van. were in agreement.[105] Even so, discussion in the F. O. had showed mixed points of view with a tendency to appease Germany further instead of changing policy. On March 17, Lord Cranborne, the Under Secretary, proposed stabilising the situation in Western Europe, and giving Germany a free hand in the east, to a certain extent. In order to achieve a limitation of German armaments, they should give her, economically, a free hand in Central Europe, "by a loan, or in other ways." "The question of the colonies, too, might be brought up in this discussion." He warned

> Do not let us, at any rate, in order to find a way out of the present emergency, put ourselves under definite obligations of which we do not know the final implications.[106]

Sargent had independently written his memo on the same line. After rejecting several alternatives, he proposed that the policy should be

> to offer Germany economic and financial help *in return for*, and *subsequent to*, a general political settlement.
>
> it certainly would seem to be the most farsighted and statesmanlike, but only on condition that we do not delay too long, for German economics will increasingly react on, and may soon dominate, German foreign politics, with quite incalculable results.[107]

Disbelieving any German assurances at their face value due to the latest incident, Van. at first had some different views on the long term policy from Lord Cranborne; but after their discussion, the divergence vanished.[108] Eden remarked, "There is much force" in Cranborne's view but he did not think "it tells quite the whole story". As to Sargent's view, Eden minuted, "I agree."[109] He did not think that the crisis had "made any difference to our intention to probe and explore Herr Hitler's offers" and to construct "something reliable out of them".[110]

Late in April, according to Eden's instruction, the F. O. drafted the questionnaire to Germany, which summed up the unclear points in the German proposals.[111] Eden and Lord Cranborne carefully examined it when they spent a weekend in Dorset in late April. On the 27th, Eden showed the document to Baldwin and Chamberlain, and the Chancellor had no objection.[112] The Foreign Secretary asked his colleagues "whether it would be advisable for a Cabinet Minister, but not himself, to discuss the questions in Berlin with the German Government."[113]

At the Cabinet meeting on the 29th, he wanted this despatch sent to Germany soon, but he doubted "whether there was a possibility of a *détente* between this country and Germany." Postponing the consideration of the questionnaire until next day, "the Cabinet entered on a preliminary review of their general policy in the new situation that was developing." Baldwin was, with the support of Simon, inclined to send the questions to the Germans by a Minister "for the reason that the ordinary diplomatic channels hardly seemed to function in dealing with dictators." But some other Cabinet members took a different view on the grounds that it was to lower the prestige of the Diplomatic Service as a whole. Furthermore, it "would encourage the Germans as to our attitude, and re-awaken French suspicions and lack of confidence that was so important a feature in the present situation." Several Ministers suggested that the discussion on this should be left until after the general policy had been settled. They emphasised the necessity and importance both in rearmament and in appeasement:

> Time was vital for the completion of our defensive security. ... There was every advantage,...in coming to terms with Hitler and fastening him down to keep the peace in the west. ... In the long run French interests were bound up with our own, so our line should be to try and obtain *détente* with Germany.

Being disturbed by the urgency and difficulty of the Defence programmes, Inskip, the Minister for Co-ordination of Defence, requested the Government to give priority to the Defence programmes rather than commercial business.[114] However, this proposal was not favourably echoed by Chamberlain, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who advocated "cheap defence" and usually kept the budget tight for all three services. He shelved the proposal, but avoided giving an immediate answer by saying that this question "should be reserved until after decisions had been reached on the major policy of the Government." In the end, the Cabinet took the Chancellor's proposal as their conclusion and appointed a Committee[115] to consider the immediate policy.[116]

The following day, the Cabinet members continued to consider the draft of a questionnaire. Eden told his partners

> that the difficulty in drafting the questions had been not to give offence to the Germans and not to encourage them to make fresh claims. The paragraph relating to colonies, for example, had been re-drafted several times so as to avoid inviting the Germans to raise their maximum demands.

It was true that when the F.O. prepared this cowardly and humiliating document, they not only avoided condemning Hitler's violation of the Treaty, but also used language that was as mild as possible. However, when they went through the draft paragraph by paragraph, the Ministers still thought some paragraphs to be "somewhat provocative" or "of rather a pin-pricking character", which "might lead the Germans to give a reply which would increase our difficulties in bringing about the desired negotiation." They agreed to a number of modifications, with the general aim of making the language even milder without losing the essential purpose. They asked the F. O. to make further revisions according to the more conciliatory tone, and the re-draft would be discussed again by the Cabinet on May 4.[117]

The Cabinet's amendments were not at all popular in the F. O. When the members of the staff (Wigram, Strang and Malkin) redrafted the document, Wigram complained to Van.,

> The real difficulty arises out of the Cabinet dissatisfaction with paragraphs 7 and 8 of the original draft. ... I find it quite impossible to work in the Secretary of State's idea ... I must re-emphasise the importance of our Questions being adequate. We *are* pledged to the French on the matter. (...) I think there would be a breach of faith with the French if the Questions were not adequate...[118]

Nevertheless, they had to, with a long discussion, make revision again and again in obedience to their masters' instructions.[119]

But at the Cabinet meeting on May 4, according to the minute, "Doubts were raised once more as to the wisdom of including Paragraph 8, which asked for an explanation of the distinction between the Reich and the German nation".[120] Eden explained that this "was a matter in which every nation in Europe was intensely interested", and "all his advisers at the Foreign Office, whatever their general attitude towards Germany, were in favour of including Paragraph 8." He warned that "if the Cabinet insisted on omitting it they would be closing their eyes to a matter of great importance." Simon and Chamberlain separately put forward their amendments for that paragraph and the latter's revision was taken into the final form of the document.[121]

On the 6th, Phipps was authorised to present the questionnaire to the Germans.[122] In his interview with Hitler a week later, the Fuhrer told him that the German reply

would not be given until after the new French Government had been in the saddle, i.e. the middle of June. He also discouraged the British desire to send a Minister to Berlin.[123] Subsequently, the Germans kept delaying an answer no matter how hard Phipps urged them.[124] The Ambassador reported on the 15th that Hitler declared openly that he would build fortifications on the Rhineland,[125] which in fact had already begun.[126] According to his observation, Hitler had been "gradually moving away from the idea of a conference or any form of general settlement."[127] The German Chancellor was "in great form" and had "no intention of replying seriously to our questions."[128] Mr Kirkpatrick, the Ambassador's subordinate, told Wigram on June 8,

> what in his opinion we ought to realise was that in a year's time it would not be we who would be addressing questions to Germany designed to ascertain whether it was worth negotiating with her, but the Germans who would be considering whether we were worth negotiating with, or whether they would simply dictate their desires to us.[129]

The information from the Berlin Embassy aroused "a continuation of the mood of disillusionment". Wigram was very pessimistic:

> In Eastern Europe I cannot see that we have anything much to gain either by agreement with Germany. ... as we have nothing to give her, she will not give us much in exchange.
>
> (it was) disturbing to think that British public opinion has been so misled by all these years of unreality that, lest it should misunderstand, we are now obliged to run after the Germans and expose ourselves to what are almost impertinences.

Van. showed his distrust in Hitler and his criticism in his minute: "Hitler has never meant business in our sense of the word. The sooner the Cabinet realise that the better for this long misguided country. (It has received little chance of comprehension, and for this the first National Government must bear a very heavy responsibility)." However, he still insisted on his former policy, namely, bargaining with Germany by supporting rearmament. This diplomatic setback did not discourage Eden either. Based on Sargent's suggestion, he instructed the F.O. that "we must continue to aim at the general agreement... It may be that it is unattainable, but it is we who must prove this, by making every effort to attain it..." Showing much more enthusiasm than his colleagues for the settlement, he suggested again "the offer of a

visit of a Minister, if only because this would make it more difficult for Herr Hitler to take refuge in evasion, & would show our public our determination to get on if we can ...."[130] But the Cabinet generally inclined to the view "that it would be mistaken to press Herr Hitler to receive a British Minister". On the other hand, it was impossible "to let the matter drift for long". In the course of discussion at the Cabinet meeting on May 20, they came to the conclusion that they should attempt to obtain a meeting of all the interested powers, at which, the Germans could be present to give their answer rather than to press them to reply immediately. However, it was pointed out that Britain wanted a settlement and knew that a Conference was the only hope. If the French and Belgian Governments learned that Hitler intended to re-fortify the Zone, all hope of a negotiation would disappear. Eden said that the last French Government would never have come to a Conference on those conditions, but the new French Government might be different.[131]

On July 1, Eden had supper with M. Blum, the new French Prime Minister, and M. Zeeland in Geneva. The two Prime Ministers expressed a desire for a meeting of the Locarno Powers.[132] The Locarno Ministers later came to a decision that the three powers would prepare a meeting probably inviting Italy but not Germany.[133] After receiving Eden's telegram, Baldwin summoned the Ministers including Lord Cranborne and Van. to discuss the position. They agreed that it was "as good an arrangement as could be hoped for in all the circumstances". The Prime Minister said that Hitler would think that "this was another attempt to annoy Germany."[134]

On the 6th, the Cabinet members had a meeting to consider the possible terms of an agreement with Germany at the proposed meeting of Locarno Powers. They found themselves having to handle three difficulties at the same time: 1) the future of the League, 2) the British policy in Eastern Europe, 3) the German colonies.

As to 1), Eden turned down the proposal of going back to the policy of the Geneva Protocol, which Churchill and the Labour Party supported, and chose the policy "to work for a new Locarno Treaty and at the same time to declare a situation in which Articles 10 and 16 of the (League) Covenant would disappear". He said,

> The object was to get Germany into conference, relinquishing the British questionnaire and asking them to come practically without conditions. If this was not done there was the risk that after the Olympic Games (August -- Author) the Powers would get further demands from Germany.

He then came to point 2) by summarising Phipps' observation:

> it might be possible to get Germany to enter into a new Locarno Treaty, but it would be at the expense of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, as Herr Hitler would never commit himself as regards Eastern Europe. ... If we tried to get the German Chancellor to commit himself to a settlement for Europe as a whole Herr Hitler would be sure to refuse.

Some Ministers added, "while the Government should make up its own mind to reduce its commitments in Eastern Europe we should not announce that we were unwilling or unable to help in Eastern Europe."

Impressed by Eden's description, his colleagues decided the general policy, which resulted in a series of crises in the future:

> our policy ought to be framed on the basis that we could not help Easter Europe. We ought, however, to resist by force any attempt against our own Empire or Flanders. If these were our basis, ... our policy towards the future of the League ought to be somewhat on French lines: that is to say of regional pacts.

Regarding the colonial issue, they decided that "if Germany raised it we should make it quite clear that we would give up nothing." In the end, they accepted the proposal that the Locarno Power meeting should be held in Brussels on July 22.[135]

As to the prospective meeting of Locarno Powers, Neurath, German Minister for Foreign Affairs, told Newton, H.M. Minister in Berlin, that Germany thought this meeting would be "premature" and would welcome a conference not earlier than September. The reply to the British questionnaire "when made might, however, throw some further light on prospects of a successful meeting."[136] That is to say that the Germans would not give any reply until autumn, or more exactly that there might not be any German reply.[137] On November 19, the British Government made its request once more, by sending a note to the Germans asking for the Agenda of the Five-Power Conference.[138] It took another four months waiting on this information. At last, the reply came on March 12, 1937 -- one year after the Rhineland coup -- in which the Germans actually refused the meeting by saying that they still accepted the invitation in principle but they "felt that ground had not yet been sufficiently prepared."[139]

VI. COMMENT

Compared with policy towards Japan and Italy, conciliatory policy towards Germany formed a major part of general appeasement. It was during the Rhineland crisis that appeasement towards Germany had been developed and formed. From then on, this policy had been carried out right down to the outbreak of the Second World War. As a result, not only was the Rhineland lost, but also the fate of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland was doomed.

In March 1936, the Western Powers had every possibility of checking Hitler. Militarily, until the end of 1935 the British still had a prospective 50 per cent superiority to the Germans in air force.[140] In addition, excluding the Belgian troops, France, without mobilisation, had a 60,000 army ready against about 20,000 German soldiers in the Rhineland.[141] It is widely accepted, as Churchill said, that if the Western Powers had taken action, "Hitler would have been compelled by his own General Staff to withdraw, and a check would have been given to his pretensions which might well have proved fatal to his rule." Failure to do so "lost irretrievably the last chance of arresting Hitler's ambitions without a serious war."[142]

However, some historians follow the appeasers' argument that public opinion did not allow Britain and France to be involved in war with Germany over the Rhineland.[143] This argument, which exaggerates unduly the view of non-intervention, aims to shift off the responsibility on to the public and helps appeasers evade the blame. In fact, not only did many newspapers demand to meet the German challenge, but also the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House strongly recommended support for the French. According to the view of the German Ambassador in London, if Sir Austen had been the Foreign Secretary and Churchill Defence Minister, the British Government might have taken joint action with France. In other words, it was the Government not the public that remained inactive. In addition, without consulting the public, appeasement towards Germany had been completed before the public was alarmed by the crisis. The British leaders not only ignored outside opinion, but also moulded it by using various means so as to create atmosphere which seemed overwhelmingly favourable to the Government's policy. Therefore, instead of influencing the Government, public opinion, as Wigram confessed, had been misled by the British leaders for their own purpose.

The policy-making in this period represented its general characteristics: the majority of senior officials, in particular Sargent, Wigram and Van, intended to come to terms with Germany. Even after the Rhineland was lost they insisted on continuing the proposed policy to appease the Germans further and more quickly rather than choosing the alternative to appeasement. The appeasers urged speedy rearmament with the purpose of obtaining a stronger position to make a deal with Germany instead of preparing to fight. The only proposal with some anti-appeasement characteristics by Mr Collier was killed at the first stage of policy-making. On the other hand, the advisers in the F.O. and Chiefs of Staff had to find a basis for policy according to their bosses' views, otherwise, their advice would be either amended or ignored.

At ministerial level, Eden, as arch-appeaser, should bear most responsibility for wrong guidance of British foreign policy at that time. Since Baldwin had little interest in foreign policy, the Foreign Secretary was the key member in the Cabinet when it came to concluding policy. His youth and his vigorous character increased his determination and power in pursuing this policy. His "appeasement", although he denied it was the same as Chamberlain's, [144] was proved to be no different from the latter's. Appeasement, after being shaped by his hand, remained as a fundamental policy towards Germany in the remaining years of the 1930s.

In addition, attention should be drawn to another two factors which led to British lack of action: firstly, the grave situation in the Far East as well as in the Mediterranean made it difficult for the appeasers to choose a firm line against Germany. When they set up Far Eastern appeasement, the original scheme was that accommodation with Japan would allow Britain to concentrate on the German menace. Now in the fact of Hitler's adventure, they believed that if Britain was involved in any trouble with Germany or Italy, Japan would take the opportunity to harm British interests in the Far East. Their logic had thus become: continuing to appease Japan in order to concentrate on Europe, on the other hand, appeasing Germany and Italy in order to rob Japan of any chance of destroying British interests in the Far East. Therefore, the appeasers would not fight anywhere.

Secondly, the British leaders were inferior to Hitler in playing a game of this kind. The German Chancellor knew them better than they did him. He foresaw correctly

that his coup against the Zone would not be answered by military action. Baldwin, however, simply did not understand the dictator at all as he said, "We none of us know what is going on in that strange man's mind." "He had never been able to find anyone who could give him really reliable information about Hitler's character and designs".[145] Before the crisis, they did not believe the French information that Hitler would strike soon; during the crisis, they turned a deaf ear to the estimate that the German troops would withdraw if other Locarno Powers interfered; and after the crisis, they were still under the illusion that Hitler was in the mood to make a deal in spite of information that showed the reverse. Their decision based on misunderstanding, therefore, could not be correct.

What is worse, the lessons drawn from the crisis show that the appeasers would continue their hopeless and powerless policy. The Chiefs of Staff reported that bound by collective security, Britain might suddenly be involved in war without full preparation due to her would-wide interests. Therefore, they advised the Cabinet to abandon the collective security rather than strengthen it.[146] Confronted with "the downfall of the League, the resurrection and consequent rivalry of Germany", Chamberlain affirmed in July 1936, "we have no policy".[147]

After the Rhineland episode, the world situation was graver: the aggressive powers came closer and finally formed the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis. In contrast, the Western Powers found themselves divergent in interests and strategic positions, facing possible aggression: Belgium broke away from the collective security of Locarno.[148] Appeasement, with its original scheme of avoiding any risk of war, put Britain in a revised position, in which she had to face three enemies at the same time. It could be said that if Manchuria and Abyssinia made the Second World War possible, the Rhineland made it almost inevitable. Moreover, the loss of the Rhineland offered Hitler a favourable situation for beginning his next adventure -- the Anschluss.

1 Gibbs, N. H., *Grand Strategy* (I), London 1976, p.135.

2 Baynes, N. H. (ed.), *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler April 1922 - August 1939*, London 1942, pp.1208-1211; *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919 - 1939*, 2nd-XII, N570.

3 *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918 - 1945*, C-IV, pp.171-178.

4 ibid, N107.

5 On August 7, Neurath, the German Foreign Minister wrote to State Secretary Bulow that it was undesirable and premature to discuss the Pact questions with Britain and France at that stage. He would not advise Hitler to make a definitive statement and "no German views can be expected before October." [ibid, N252.]

6 Hitler had only spoken his consideration to Herr von Neurath, the Foreign Minister; Herr von Blomberg, Colonel General and War Minister; Herr von Fritsch, General and Commander in Chief of the Army; Herr von Ribbentrop, Ambassador Extraordinary; Herr Goering, General and President of the Reich; von Bulow, State Secretary; Hassell, Germany Ambassador in Italy; and Dr. Forster, Counselor at the German Embassy in France on several occasions. [ibid, N564 & note 3, N575; Haraszti, E. H., *The Invaders: Hitler Occupies the Rhineland*, Budapest 1983, Appendix VIII: Forester, *Details of The Rhineland Occupation*.]

7 DGFP C-IV, N564.

8 ibid, N579; Haraszti, Appendix VIII; Nicolson, N. (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1930-1939*, London 1966, p.247.

9 DGFP C-IV, N575.

10 *Harold Nicolson's Diaries*, p.249. Phipps heard privately that "the Army Chiefs have advised against any military action in the matter." A German General Staff officer also confirmed to the British Military Attaché that "the Chancellor's decision to enter into demilitarised zone was taken ... against the advice of General Staff who thought and still think the risk was too great" on the grounds that France would demand withdrawal of the German troops, failing which she might attempt to drive them out by force. [DBFP 2nd-XVI, Nos. 27, 52 note 2.]

11 Shirer, W. L., *The Rise and Fall of The Third Reich*, London 1961, p.291; DGFP C-IV, p.1218.

12 DGFP C-V, N3.

13 Schmidt, P., *Hitler's Interpreter*, London 1950, p.41.

14 For example, apart from Eden and Van., many other staff such as Mr Carr; Mr Wigram, Head of the Central Department; Sargent , Counselor at the F.O.; Mr W. Strang, Counsellor at the F.O.; Lord Stanhope, Parliamentary Under Secretary; and Lord Cranborne, Under Secretary held this point of view. [DBFP 2nd-XV, N490 & notes 2, 3, N493.]

15 Van also had a strong influence on his bosses. He was Baldwin's private secretary before he became Permanent Under-Secretary. He was close to MacDonald and his advice had great weight in the latter's decision and latter's cabinet. Being a long time in his post as PUS, he worked with three Foreign Secretaries. Simon quite relied on him. Hoare was perhaps the Foreign Secretary whom Van had most influence on. It was generally accepted in the Cabinet that Hoare had been misled by his official Van during the Hoare-Laval affair. Eden usually took Van's suggestion too although their personal relationship was poor. Chamberlain disliked this and said, "Van had the effect of multiplying the extent of Anthony's natural vibrations..." [DBFP 2nd-XV, Appendix II (b); Rose, *Vansittart: Study of a Diplomat*, London 1978, pp. 63-64, 109, 164, 165, 167, 168; Avon, *Facing The Dictators*, London 1962, pp. 187, 521; Colvin, *Vansittart in Office*, London 1965, pp. 21, 148; Simon, *Retrospect*, London 1952, p. 177; Jones, T., *A Diary with Letters 1931-1950*, London 1954, pp.158-160; Middlemas, *Diplomacy of Illusion*, London 1972, p. 78.]

16 DBFP 2nd-XVII, Appendix II, pp.794, 796.

17 Templewood, *Nine Troubled Years*, London 1954, pp.136, 202, 256-257; Dutton, D., "Simon and Eden at the Foreign Office 1931-1935", *Review of International Studies* (1994) Vol. 20, pp.42-43; Halifax, *Fulness of Days*, London 1957, pp.194-195; Avon, pp.319, 383, 445.

18 Avon., p.242.

19 Templewood, p.373.
20 Gilbert & Gott, *The Appeasers*, London 1963, p. 11; Rose, p. vii.
21 Simon, p.178.
22 See Chapter 1, p. 59 above.
23 DBFP 2nd-VI, Appendix III.
24 DBFP 2nd-XIII, N14.
25 DBFP 2nd-VI, N322.
26 DGFP C-IV, N107.
27 DBFP 2nd-XV, N507.
28 ibid, N213.
29 ibid, N271 & note 3.
30 A collection of Phipps' despatches from 1933 to 1935 was circulated to the Cabinet as an important reference for the German problem. [ibid, N460.]
31 ibid, Appendix I (a).
32 ibid, Appendix I (b).
33 ibid, Appendix I (c) & note 16.
34 ibid, N241.
35 ibid, N383; DGFP C-IV, Nos. 460, 462.
36 DBFP 2nd-XV, N383 note 7, N404.
37 ibid, N404 note 5.
38 ibid, N382.
39 ibid, N455.
40 ibid, N455 note 3, N476; Gibbs, p.230. Among the Cabinet members, there used to exist different opinions towards the zone. Baldwin said to the House on July 30, 1934, "When you think of the defence of England, you no longer think of the chalk cliffs of Dover; you think of the Rhine". Simon also suggested to the Cabinet in early 1935 that the demilitarisation of the Rhineland should still be considered "a vital British interest." But after discussion, the Cabinet drew the opposite conclusion. [Gibbs, pp.107, 228.]
41 DBFP 2nd-XV, N476.
42 ibid, N521 & note 1.
43 ibid, N460.
44 Cab23/83 3(36); DBFP 2nd-XV, N460 note 3, N460 note 3; DBFP 2nd-XX, Nos. 450, 457; also see Chapter 2, pp. 105-106 above.
45 ibid, N382.
46 ibid, N471, N493 note 7, N497, Appendix IV (b).
47 ibid, Appendix IV (b).
48 ibid, N509.
49 ibid, N509 note 3.
50 ibid, N521 note 1.
51 ibid, Nos. 482, 483.
52 ibid, N521.
53 ibid, N524.
54 ibid, N541.
55 DBFP 2nd-XVI, Nos. 9, 10, 12.
56 The Franco-Russian Pact was ratified by 353 votes to 164 in the French Chamber on February 27, 1936. The British Government had much reservation over this Pact. In the Cabinet meeting of February 12, Eden said that "we had not been consulted before the signature of the pact and there appeared no reason why we should express any opinion." It was suggested that they should tell Germany that "we had had nothing to do with the matter." [Cab23/83 6(36).]
57 Cab23/83 15(36).
58 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N29 & note 5; DGFP C-V, N8.
59 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N24.
60 Baynes, pp.1271-1302.
61 DGFP C-V, N66.
62 Gannon, F. R., *The British Press and Germany 1936 - 1939*, Oxford 1971, pp.93-99.

63 *Harold Nicolson's Diaries*, p.248; DGFP C-V, Nos. 66, 178.
64 H.C. Debs. 5s Vol. 309, col. 1863.
65 DGFP C-V, Nos. 66, 178.
66 *Harold Nicolson's Diaries*, pp.249-250.
67 Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, London 1948, pp.159-160; DGFP C-V,. N178.
68 DGFP C-V, N178. It was generally accepted that Churchill would be appointed as Minister of Co-ordinate Defence. However, to everyone's surprise, Inskip, instead, was announced as Defence Minister on March 13 by the Cabinet, who thought that appointment of Churchill would be "provocative" to Hitler. [ibid, N178 note 9; Middlemas and Barnes, *Baldwin*, London 1969, pp.916-917.]
69 Avon, p.367.
70 Adamthwaite, A., "The British Government and the Media, 1937-1938", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 18 (1983), pp.282-283.
71 H. C. Debs. 5s. Vol. 309, col. 1812
72 Avon., p.343.
73 ibid, p.344; DBFP 2nd-XVI, N39.
74 ibid, Nos. 40, 47.
75 ibid, N48. At the Locarno Power meeting of March 10, Italy declared that being "a State subject to sanctions" due to the Abyssinian problem, she "could not agree in advance to any action of political, economic, or military character". [ibid, N63.]
76 ibid, N48.
77 Avon., p.346.
78 H. C. Debs. 5s. Vol.309, cols. 1808-1813.
79 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N49 & note 3; Avon, p.347.
80 ibid, N63.
81 ibid, N70 note 1; Cab23/83 18(36).
82 Cab23/83 18(36).
83 DBFP 2nd-XVI, Nos. 70, 74, 78 note 7; DGFP C-V, N85.
84 Churchill, p.153; *Harold Nicolson's Diaries*, pp.250-251.
85 Churchill. p.154; also see the possible record of this conversation in DBFP 2nd-XVI, N78.
86 Feiling, *Life of Neville Chamberlain*, London 1946, p.279.
87 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N109; also see Nos. 82, 91.
88 ibid, N119.
89 ibid, N110.
90 ibid, N110 note 5.
91 ibid, N115 & note 2.
92 In the final Resolution of March 19, it says, "decide to invite the German Government to lay before the Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague the argument which it claims to draw from the incompatibility between the Franco-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance and the Treaty of Locarno, and to undertake to accept as final the decision of the said court, without prejudice to the operation of paragraph 7(2) below. (i.e. revision of the status of the Rhineland.)" [ibid, N144.]
93 Cab23/83 21(36).
94 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N132 note 5, N144; Avon., p.360.
95 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N145; DGFP C-V, N162.
96 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N163; DGFP C-V, N207.
97 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N193; DGFP C-V, N242.
98 Cab23/83 26(36).
99 DBFP 2nd-XVI, p.228, Nos. 222, 223.
100 ibid, N202.
101 Cab23/83 28(36).
102 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N219.
103 ibid, Nos. 234, 277.
104 See p. 140 above.
105 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N74; DGFP C-V, N85.
106 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N122.

107 ibid, N135.
108 ibid, N121, N122 note 4.
109 ibid, N122 note 4, N135 note 5.
110 ibid, N272.
111 ibid, N277.
112 Avon., p.371.
113 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N277 note 10.
114 Duff Cooper said at the Cabinet meeting of March 11 that "in three years' time, though we should have reconditioned at any rate to some extent our small forces, yet by that time Germany would have 100 divisions and a powerful fleet. We should not relatively, therefore, be in a better position." [See Cab23/83 18(36).] As to the policy of rearmament, please see Chapter 1, pp.60-61; Chapter 5, pp. 235-239; Chapter 6, pp.257-258.
115 The Cabinet Committee was composed of Baldwin (in the chair), MacDonald, Chamberlain, Lord Hailsham, Simon, Eden, Halifax and Inskip.
116 DBFP 2nd-XVI, Appendix I (a) *Extract from Cabinet Minutes of April 29, 1936.*
117 ibid, Appendix I (b) *Extract from Cabinet Minutes of April 30, 1936.*
118 ibid, N283.
119 ibid, Nos. 283, 304, 306.
120 ibid, N304 note 2.
121 ibid, N304 & notes 2, 3; N307.
122 ibid, Nos. 277 note 10, 310.
123 ibid, N324.
124 ibid, Nos. 340, 369, 374, 394. On June 16, Neurath told Phipps that he had drafted the reply some time ago and submitted it to the Fuhrer. It should have been handed to the British Ambassador on June 19, but Hitler held on to the document "in view of the impending meeting of remaining Locarno Powers." [ibid, Nos. 374, 369; DGFP C-V, N466.]
125 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N328.
126 ibid, Nos. 320, 414.
127 ibid, N339.
128 ibid, N371.
129 ibid, N356.
130 ibid, N328 note 3; N339 note 2.
131 Cab23/83 38(36).
132 DBFP 2nd-XVI, N393.
133 ibid, N404.
134 ibid, N407 note 4.
135 ibid, Appendix II *Extract from Cabinet Minutes of July 6, 1936.* The Three Power meeting was held in London on July 23 according to the British Government's suggestion. Italy refused the invitation with some reluctance. [ibid, Nos. 420, 429, 432, 436.]
136 ibid, N417.
137 Toynbee (ed.), *Survey of International Affairs 1936*, p.341.
138 DBFP 2nd-XVII, N389.
139 DBFP 2nd-XVIII, N274.
140 Gibbs, pp.139-140; DBFP 2nd-XVII, N386 & notes 1, 4.
141 DBFP 2nd-XVI, Nos.82, 112.
142 Churchill, p.152.
143 Eubank, *The Origins of World War II*, Illinois 1969, pp.56-57; Bell, *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe*, London 1986, p.211; Adams, *British Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement 1935-39*, London 1993, p.47; Avon, p.376.
144 ibid, pp.324, 366-367.
145 Middlemas & Barnes, pp. 947, 950.
146 Gibbs, p.252.
147 Feiling, p.295.
148 *Survey* 1936, pp. 351-360

Chapter 4 THE ANSCHLUSS

I. THE ANSCHLUSS AND ITS PREPARATION

The Austro-German union was forbidden by the Versailles Treaty. However, it was one of the principal aims that Hitler had declared in *Mein Kampf*. As soon as he came to power, his policy towards Austria was the *Gleichschaltung* that preceded the Anschluss, namely, working for the collapse of the Austrian Government and replacing it by the Austrian Nazi Party, which offered a basis for the Austro-German union.[1]

On July 25,1934, the Austrian Nazis attacked the Federal Chancellery and killed Chancellor Dollfuss, declaring the formation of a new government; but the *Putsch* was immediately put down by the Federal Army and police.[2] Learning from this failure, Hitler adopted Papen's proposal that the problem of Austrian union with Germany could only be resolved by "evolutionary methods", namely, by creating a proper international situation and by pressure from outside.[3] He appointed Papen as Ambassador in Vienna on a special mission to be in charge of the Austrian affairs. On the other hand, he and Goering personally enforced control of the Austrian Nazi Party.

On July 11, 1936, Papen, representing the German Government, signed an agreement with Schuschnigg, the Austria Chancellor. By this agreement, the Austrian Government had to associate with the Nazi Opposition and to pursue a common foreign policy with Germany. The possible Austro-German Union had become "family affairs" between the two German States.[4] At the same time, Hitler instructed the General Staff to draw up "Special Operation Otto" -- a military plan to occupy Austria, which was renewed under his direction on June 24, 1937.[5]

In the mean time, the European situation was turning more and more favourable to Hitler's adventure. Italy, the main obstacle to the Anschluss, split from the Stresa Front due to her quarrel with Britain and France over the Abyssinian business. Mussolini had realised as early as April 1935 that he had to give up Austria so as to complete his ambition in Africa.[6] Early in 1936, the Duce on various occasions told Hassell, German Ambassador in Italy, that the Stresa Front had died and Locarno

would cease.[7] As to Austria, he had a long conversation with the Ambassador on January 6, in which he said,

> If Austria, as a formally quite independent State, were thus in practice to become a German satellite, he would have no objection.[8]

It was apparent that Mussolini had left Austria to Hitler. Late in October, the Berlin-Rome axis was formed,[9] and the possibility of Italian interference had been completely dismissed.

On the British side, Simon (Foreign Secretary) and Eden (Parliamentary Under-Secretary) had showed British understanding to the Fuhrer's desire during their visit to Berlin in March 1935. Simon told Hitler,

> Britain had not the same interest in Austria, as, for example, in Belgium. She had never interfered in Austrian affairs and was still confining herself to the hope that the problems there would be solved.[10]

Halifax conveyed clearer information to the Fuhrer in November 1937. In their conversation, the main problems discussed were disarmament, colonies, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Danzig and the League of Nations. The British Minister implied acquiescence in the German reoccupation of the Rhineland and went on to state on behalf of H.M.G that

> possibility of change of the existing situation was not excluded, but that changes should only take place upon the basis of reasonable agreements reasonably reached. ... Amongst these questions were Danzig, Austria, and Czechoslovakia.[11]

He particularly emphasised "that also applies to Austria". When he heard this, "Hitler again became excited."[12]

Soon after Halifax's visit, Eden gave confirmation to Ribbentrop, the German Ambassador in London,

> He had told the French that the question of Austria was of much greater interest to Italy than to England. Furthermore, people in England recognized that a closer connection between Germany and Austria would have to come about sometime.
>
> England and France agreed that in Central Europe (Austria and Czechoslovakia) certain changes could be made, provided, however, that the *status quo* was not changed by force.[13]

Time seemed ripe for the Fuhrer to consider the final solution. On November 5, 1937, he summoned his subordinates (three commanders-in-chief, war minister and foreign minister) to decide the plan of German expansion. In his opinion, England would never give up her colonies, so Germany could only seek for this space in Europe. He analysed that Britain was not able to defend her Empire by her own power, "but only by in alliance with other states." France, in spite of her greater military strength, was confronted with internal political difficulties. He believed that "Germany's problem could only be solved by means of force and this was never without attendant risk." He estimated that action should have been taken by 1943-45 because the rest of the world not have completed its counter-measures against German invasion by that time. Therefore Germany "were obliged to take the offensive." The Fuhrer considered that there were two cases in which there was the necessity for action -- either France was involved in serious domestic crisis or she was embroiled by a war with another country, for example with Italy. Hitler "was convinced of Britain's nonparticipation, and therefore he did not believe in the probability of belligerent action by France against Germany." Hitler concluded that the time for a German attack on the Czechs and Austria "must be made dependent on the course of the Anglo-French-Italian war", which, he foresaw, would come nearer, probably in the summer of 1938.[14]

However, the situation in Austria did not amuse Berlin very much. Schuschnigg, despite conceding to German pressure, insisted on the importance of Austrian independence and hesitated to absorb the Austrian Nazi leaders into his cabinet. Neurath, the German Foreign Minister strongly condemned him by asking, did Schuschnigg "really think that he can proceed with ruthless measures against National Socialism in Austria and still steer a common course with the Reich in matters affecting the German peoples?" Papen warned the Austrian Chancellor on December 21, "the Agreement of July 11 was not functioning satisfactorily, ... Germany had to demand more than mere passive assistance from Austria."[15] With Hitler's approval, he arranged a conference of the German and Austrian Chancellors with the purpose of clarifying "the controversial issues" between them.[16]

The meeting was held at Berchtesgaden on February 12, 1938. During the stormy interview, Hitler threatened Schuschnigg by saying that if his guest did not

meet his demands, he would immediately order the Army to march across the border. In order to destroy Schuschnigg's idea of turning to the Western Powers, he side, "Halifax had completely approved of German's attitude towards Austria and Czechoslovakia." In the end, Schuschnigg yielded. Seyss-Inquast, the Austrian Nazi leader, was to be offered a post in Schuschnigg's cabinet as Minister of the Interior.[17]

However, the Austrians did not want to surrender completely. After he failed to gain support from the Western Powers, Schuschingg took a final measure to defend the independence of his Motherland, calling a plebiscite on March 13.[18] This provoked the Fuhrer, who was considering a final solution of the Austrian problem either by evolutionary means or by force if necessary.[19] Information from Paris showed that France would not interfere due to her internal problems although Flandin, the French Foreign Minister, said, "a formal 'Anschluss' had to be avoided." Britain held a more conciliatory attitude on the eve of the Anschluss as Halifax, the successor of Eden, emphasised when he told Ribbentrop, who was visiting London that "England had no attention of 'blocking up Austria'. England admitted that this was a problem which primarily concerned Germany." According to the record, Henderson, the new Ambassador in Berlin, even told Hitler on March 3 that he himself "often advocated the Anschluss."[20]

The Fuhrer decided to act. He first sent Keppler, his right-hand man, to Vienna "to prevent the plebiscite", and then gave the order to execute "Operation Otto" on March 11.[21] On the morning of the 12th, the German troops rolled across the border. Austria had become province "Ostmark" in the Third Reich.

II. IMPORTANT PERSONNEL CHANGES IN CHAMBERLAIN'S GOVERNMENT

In 1936, Baldwin's health, which had not been very good before, was worsening. It made his retirement "both desirable and impossible" because he could hardly deal with successive crises with his disability. It was widely thought that Chamberlain would take over.[22]

In May 1937 Chamberlain replaced Baldwin, forming "a one-man Government". With a nature made up of alertness, fixed opinions, self-confidence and intolerance, he immediately gave his colleagues the impression that he was a more powerful Prime

Minister than his predecessor. "His mind, once made up, hard to change."[23] He ran the Cabinet with an iron hand: his "remarkable strength of character and single-minded determination" kept the majority of his colleagues at his side. He was close to Hoare, Simon and Halifax, and often consulted them about foreign policy.[24] However, his interfering in the conduct of foreign policy annoyed Eden very much, who believed that the Prime Minister knew nothing about diplomacy.[25] This was perhaps one of the reasons that led to the breakdown of their relationship.

Chamberlain had previously made his impact on foreign policy making as the Chancellor of the Exchequer, mainly by cutting expenditure on rearmament, which had the effect of pushing foreign policy to the direction of conceding to the aggressors. Now as the Prime Minister, he was over-confident in reaching "a reasonable understanding with both Germany and Italy", as he said,

> The dictators are too often regarded as though they were entirely inhuman. I believe this idea to be quite erroneous. ... they can be approached with the greatest hope of successful issue. [26]

Although historical fact had proved his Munich policy was wrong, he never doubted the rightness of what he had done at Munich until his death.[27] During his long premiership, the British foreign policy was unfortunately pulled further and further into a disastrous abyss under his dictatorial instruction.

The first personnel change after Chamberlain took office was announced at the beginning of 1938 that Van. was moved from the post of Permanent Under Secretary to Chief Diplomatic Adviser. The new appointment was aimed at reducing his effect on policy making because he was more and more at odds with his colleagues.[28] From then on, he advised and functioned "ONLY IF AND WHEN ASKED."[29]

Van.'s successor was Sir Alexander Cadogan, who was "an individual of great discretion, serving men of very different stamp with apparently complete composure." He was favoured by Ministers because he held "a less black view of German intentions" and was able to take a line which they "naturally found more palatable than Vansittant's incessant admonitions."[30] As for Central and Eastern Europe, the new Permanent Under Secretary explored his idea in his Diaries that German expansion in that area was inevitable and Britain could not stop it.[31]

During this period, Sir Horace Wilson "gained in influence". A graduate of the London School of Economics, he had been Chief Industrial Adviser to the

Government since 1930. He was an "invaluable" civil servant to Chamberlain because he could, "with his knowledge and his understanding", share Chamberlain's loneliness, which was inevitably resulted from the Prime Minister's position. It was not certain whether he "shared Chamberlain's ideas, or shaped them", but it was certain that he "promulgated them". Becoming Chamberlain's confidential adviser, he was "a power unequalled by any member of the Cabinet except the Prime Minister." Not only did Chamberlain trust him, but also Halifax and Hoare admired him. His role, as the German Embassy commented, was "the Prime Minister's closest adviser. It is well known that Sir Horace Wilson is decidedly pro-German, but he keeps himself completely in the background."[32]

However, the greatest change was that Eden resigned on February 20, 1938 due to a divergence in outlook between him and Chamberlain over the issue of the *de jure* recognition of the Italian conquest of Abyssinia. The Prime Minister wanted to buy off Mussolini unconditionally by offering him this recognition so as to "bring appeasement in the Mediterranean."[33] Eden, however, proposed that Anglo-Italian *rapprochement* could only be reached on the condition that Italy withdrew her volunteers from Spain and ceased anti-British propaganda.[34] However, until the beginning of 1938, he, in spite of some reservations, accommodated himself to Chamberlain's desire regarding appeasement with Italy.[35]

This was the apparent reason that led his resignation. However, it was difficult to find any principal divergence between the courses that they wanted to pursue. Some of his colleagues simply could not understand why he decided to resign. The underlying reason perhaps was, as Halifax analysed, that Eden could not tolerate Chamberlain's interference in foreign policy any longer. His resignation was "a result of difference of temperament and training" and a point that "had been reached where the Prime Minister and Eden no longer saw eye to eye over the methods" that were "desirable to use in furtherance of their common object."[36] Therefore, it is a common misunderstanding among many statesmen and scholars to say that his resignation reflected his rift with Chamberlain over general appeasement including policy towards Germany.[37] Whereas, in fact, his policy toward Germany was completely in accordance with Chamberlain's, as we will discuss in this chapter.[38]

After Eden resigned, Halifax, whom Chamberlain thought the only suitable candidate, was appointed as Foreign Secretary. Halifax was "a man of simplicity and humility." Unlike his predecessor, he preferred to follow Chamberlain rather than to initiate foreign policy. Sometimes he did voice his different views, but without insisting on them, he could cooperate very well with the Prime Minister. Chamberlain always admired him as "a Cabinet mind", and relied very much on his judgement.[39]

In addition, according to Van's recommendation, Eden appointed Sir Nevile Henderson, from three candidates, to be the British Ambassador in Berlin in April 1937.[40] Henderson's pro-German attitude was very well known as his colleagues critically noted:

> Sir N. Henderson had by now created for himself such an entirely Nazi reputation everywhere that much of what he says is discounted.

Van later was very angry with Henderson's behaviour in Berlin and said, "Henderson is a complete Nazi," and "the Foreign Office do not trust him to represent their real point of view."[41] Even so, Henderson was admired as usual by Chamberlain, who even turned down ministers' proposals on the strength of the Ambassador's suggestions.[42] We will see how British foreign policy in forthcoming crises was misled by his Excellency.

Until the outbreak of war, although the F.O. was still a part of the policy-making machinery, more important procedures had been shifting to the Foreign Policy Committee of the Cabinet (FPC),[43] particularly in the hands of "the Big Four", referring to Chamberlain, Halifax, Simon and Hoare. Whatever decision was reached, it would be the product of their complete agreement.[44] It was widely recognised that the foreign policy was "run by the P.M. and a small committee". Some F.O. staff "discussed frankly the P.M.'s dictatorship in the Cabinet." Chamberlain, in Harvey's words, "likes his present Cabinet of yes-men", in which he could dictate and carry out his policy with (and sometimes without) co-operation of his team.[45]

To sum up, all these resignations and appointments meant, as Butler, Parliamentary Under Secretary, remarked, the decline of the old pro-French foreign service and the ascendancy of pro-German diplomats in the Chamberlain Government.[46] It had completed the personnel changes that paved the way for pushing appeasement further.

III. BRITISH POLICY-MAKING BEFORE THE ANSCHLUSS

1. A Policy of "Keeping Germany Guessing"

When Chamberlain was to take over, apart from the Far East, the British Government faced two troublesome factors, which were linked to each other -- Italy's disturbance in the Mediterranean and Germany's expansion in Europe. Britain's acquiescence in Italian success in Abyssinia did not constitute a split in the Stresa Front;[47] however, by comparison with the German danger, the Italian problem was of only secondary importance. Although there existed controversy in policy towards Italy, the F.O. were unanimous in conclusion about the German issue under the guideline of Eden's speeches at Leamington and Bradford.[48]

On May 4, 1937, Mr O'Malley, Counsellor and Head of Southern Department, minuted, that

> if it became practicable to improve our relations with Germany, the Italians would be given much wholesome food for thought and might be expected to become more tractable.

He reminded the Government that he had suggested before that Britain should be "ready to sell the lumber of Versailles." Now he asked whether it was "a vital British interest that Austria and Czechoslovakia should not (whatever the territorial and constitutional position be) fall under German domination." One month later, he put forward another memo on the same line.[49] In the mean time, Henderson expressed a more radical view in his memo of May 10 that none of the German aims -- the absorption of Austria and part of Czechoslovakia, expansion in the east and recovery of colonies -- "need injure purely British national interests." Following the line in Eden's speeches, which, to his understanding, showed that Britain was only prepared to defend Western Europe, he suggested that it was unwise to oppose German "peaceful expansion" in Central and Eastern Europe, and "Germany might well be given some colonies." If Anglo-German understanding could be achieved by offering the above terms:

> British friendship with Germany could and would serve British national policy by restraining both Russian intrigues and ambitions, as well as Italian aspiration in the Mediterranean.[50]

The above proposals raised intensive discussion in the F.O. Minuting on O'Malley's paper, Van. said, "honour, moral principles & utility all dictate that we shd. not compromise or bargain with their independence." But he explained, "I don't suppose it is really intended that we should assist at destruction of the independence of smaller European countries." Sargent, Assistant Under-Secretary, despite divergence on some points in O'Malley's proposal about Italy, confessed that he did not think there was any disagreement as regards the desirability of reaching an understanding with Germany:

> it is of vital importance that any agreement with Germany should be reached at once, even at a considerable cost.

Both Eden and Van supported his conclusion and the former summed up, "Nothing could be more beneficial for the interests of H.M.G. than an improvement of Anglo-German relations even if it only proved temporary".[51]

Nevertheless, the F.O. were not very happy with Henderson's proposal because, as Van criticised, it was a "full acceptance of the German attitude."[52] However, Mr Strang, Head of the Central Department, thought that this was "not necessarily a decisive objection" to it although it represented "a very considerable departure" from Government's policy. The main difference between the Ambassador's policy and the Government's lay:

> in the terms of the intimation which he proposes to make to the German Government of our acquiescence in German expansion in Central and Eastern Europe, provided certain conditions are fulfilled. Whether or not we believe that territorial expansion by Germany is in any event inevitable, we should, by making any such intimation to the German Government, run the gravest risks of disturbing the stability of Europe.
>
> The position so far as we are concerned is as follows: (1) any territorial change in Central and Eastern Europe, even if it comes slowly and in good order, is certain to have political effects in Europe, ... (2) we are not (though we do not publicly say so) prepared to intervene by force of arms to prevent it; (3) the object of our policy is to keep the situation as steady as we can, without bringing ourselves face to face with war.

Therefore, he opposed "making too plain an intimation to Germany of our acquiescence in her expansion." Van and Sargent warmly admired this commentary and the former recommended it to Eden. The Foreign Secretary sent this

commentary together with Henderson's paper to Halifax while the Lord President was visiting Germany in mid-November.[53]

At the Imperial Conference on May 19, Eden explained in further detail the policy as set out in the Leamington-Bradford speeches:

> We might disinterest ourselves altogether in Central Europe and confine ourselves strictly to our vital interests in the Low Countries and Northern France. Such a policy would be unwise and would most certainly invite aggression. Alternatively, we might declare our readiness to fight for Czecho-Slovakia or Austria if they became the victims of aggression. That would mean going far beyond our obligations under the Covenant and far beyond what the people of this country were prepared to go. ... There remained the third possibility, namely, that without undertaking any military commitment we should make it clear that we were interested in events in Central Europe.[54]

This was the policy of "keep Germany guessing", and so-called.

The Ministers including Chamberlain were completely in accordance with this line. From the very beginning, the new Prime Minister had been "trying to improve relations with the 2 storm centres Berlin and Rome." The reason was that he did not believe that France was "in a very strong position to give us much help" because of her serious domestic problems. America was not reliable either owing to her isolation. Moreover, at least £1,500 million must be spent on rearmament, which "seemed likely to be more than we could find without heavily increased taxation for an indefinite period." In the face of the Far East and Europe, he was an unequivocal advocate of pursuing appeasement towards Japan with the purpose of allowing Britain to concentrate on Europe. Following this logic, he argued that "if we were involved in a war with Japan or Germany, Italy might join in." He pointed out,

> The ideal, no doubt, was to be prepared to fight Germany or Italy or Japan, either separately or in combination. That, however, was a counsel of perfection which it was impossible to follow. There were limits to our resources, both physical and financial, and it was vain to contemplate fighting single-handed the three strongest Powers in combination.

His recipe was, as he told his colleagues at the meeting of the Committee of the Imperial Defence on July 5, that "defensive preparations against Germany received first consideration." However, "the best insurance" against possible aggression from Italy "would be a friendly Germany."

Therefore, he was eager to make a friendly approach towards the dictator powers, particularly Germany. His general scheme included two aspects: Britain could offer Italy *de jure* recognition in order to restore the Stresa Front. Italy would again be a deterrent to German expansion in Central Europe. On the other hand, he believed that,

> we ought so to direct our foreign policy that we did not quarrel with Germany. If we could do that he did not feel that we need fear any sudden attack by Italy.

His conclusion, which was as same as the F.O.'s, was generally shared by his colleagues.[55]

2. Looking for an Opportunity of Rapprochement

In mid-June the British Government invited the German Foreign Minister, Neurath, to visit London "to discuss openly all questions affecting Anglo-German relations".[56] Eden told his colleagues that this visit "ought to be useful".[57] Mr Strang prepared a proposal for the forthcoming conference:

> Germany is in favour of change, and of drastic change. She has strengthened herself in order to secure that changes should take place to her advantage, by peaceful means if possible, but by war if necessary. We... have not reached any clear conclusion in our own minds as to what changes we should regard as tolerable.

Based on the policy of "keeping Germany guessing", he suggested,

> that we cannot make any promise that we shall intervene by force of arms in any part of Europe other than Western Europe. As regards this, we do not say 'Yes', and we do not say 'No'.

The proposal was discussed in the F.O.[58] Sargent, however, supplemented later that they should discourage Germany's ambition in Central and Eastern Europe by telling her that "The annexation of Austria by Germany, or even a proposal to that effect, would produce in Europe a highly dangerous political crisis, and as such would at once come before the League Council." Eden admired this suggestion.[59] Indeed, like Chamberlain, he did not think that Britain was able to undertake a military commitment to Austria or Czechoslovakia.[60]

However, Neurath's visit was first postponed and then cancelled, using the excuses of *the Deutschland* and *Leipzig* incidents,[61] but in fact the real reason was

that Hitler did not approve of it.[62] This disappointed the British leaders very much, but did not exhaust their wish for a rapprochement with Germany.

Chamberlain took "the opportunity of making friendly references to Germany in 2 speeches but though these seemed to be appreciated they elicited no corresponding response". He regretted to say, "the way to Berlin was blocked."[63] Eden found the same. In this period, the Foreign Secretary presided over four meetings of the respective Ambassadors from Germany, Italy and France, aiming to save the Non-Intervention Committee from complete collapse due to the *Leipzig* incident.[64] In addition, he persuaded Mr Dawson, the Editor of *The Times*, to hold back some articles by Lord Lothian, which he assumed might damage the possibility of an impending agreement with Germany.[65] However, his efforts, like Chamberlain's, were to no avail as he told his colleagues in September:

> Hitherto all attempts to get to closer quarter with Germany have failed and for the moment nothing more can be done in that quarter.[66]

A chance seemed to come in mid-October: Halifax received the invitation to the hunting exhibition of November in Berlin. It was, in Henderson's words, another chance "to break the ice of bad relations with the Nazi Government".[67] Halifax wrote in his memoir that when he told Eden of this news, the latter said quite seriously,

> that he was not sure whether it might not be of some advantage for me to go to Germany under this cover.[68]

Eden himself confessed that he "was not eager, but saw no sufficient reason to oppose it."[69] On the 22nd, he informed the British Embassy in Berlin that

> It would clearly be undesirable that Lord Halifax should accept this invitation unless we could be reasonably sure that he would see some persons in authority.[70]

However, in the F.O., Sargent analysed some disadvantages of the proposed visit on the 27th, observing that it seemed to put Halifax on "a special mission" but in fact his intention was "merely to make a *tour d'horizon* on the lines of those which have taken place in the past." In addition, Henderson was to be instructed to have conversations either with Goering or Neurath about "some very definite statements and proposals" from Goering, which should not be allowed to "pass unanswered". On the other hand, Eden would probably meet Neurath at the Brussels Conference. It might lead to the misunderstanding that Halifax was sent to Berlin to continue the

conversation initiated in Brussels. Van. was worried about this too and even suggested that "it is also probable that Lord Halifax wd. not have gone to Berlin." But Cadogan thought that as Halifax had already accepted the invitation, it was "undesirable to cancel it" though there was some inconvenience.[71]

In the mean time, Henderson reported that it was quite unlikely that Hitler would meet the British minister in Berlin during the exhibition: Halifax had either to wait in Berlin until after the exhibition or propose himself to Berchtesgaden without encouragement. But even so, the Ambassador strongly recommended that the "present opportunity is one which we should not allow to pass."[72]

On November 10, Cranborne, Under-Secretary, told Chamberlain that, according to Eden's telephone instruction from Brussels,

> there was no great enthusiasm on the part of Herr Hitler for such a visit. This did not perhaps so much matter if the plan was to fit in a conversation merely as a side product of visit by Lord Halifax ... Moreover, we might appear in the role of suppliant, which would be most undesirable. Under such circumstances you (Eden -- Author) were of the view that the visit would hardly be justified.

Chamberlain replied that he fully agreed that if it became necessary for Lord Halifax to ask for an interview, the effect which would be produced would be deplorable. But he did not see that this should be necessary. If Halifax were to receive an invitation to go to Berchestgarden, he would be glad to accept.[73]

As soon as he returned from Brussels on November 14, Eden had a meeting with Chamberlain, Halifax and Van. He "by this time had come to regard Halifax's visit as not necessarily a bad thing as H. would impress Hitler, provided the visit was always kept informal and no negotiations were started".[74]

The guideline for Halifax's visit was, as Eden told Halifax and Henderson on October 27:

> The former (Halifax -- Author) will listen and confine himself to warning comment on Austria and Czecho-slovakia. ... I have impressed on Sir N. Henderson the need for doing all we can to *discourage* German initiative in these two states. We must keep Germany guessing as to our attitude.[75]

Chamberlain took a similar point of view that "It was no part of my plan that we should make or receive any offer. What I wanted H[alifax] to do was to convince Hitler of our sincerity and to ascertain what objectives he had in mind." He instructed

Halifax that "he would be well content to see things move slowly and that they could not be expected to do otherwise."[76]

During his visit (the 17th - 21st), Halifax had an interview with the Fuhrer and other top German leaders such as Goering, Blomberg and Goebbels.[77] When he came back to London on the 22nd, he gave Eden and Chamberlain an account of the visit.[78] Two days later, he reported to the Cabinet his general impression. According to his observation, the Colonies were the only outstanding issue between the two countries, but it would not lead to war. As for Central and Eastern Europe, Hitler had expressed satisfaction with the Austro-German Agreement of July 1936 and he had said that Czecho-Slovakia "only needed to treat the Germans living within her borders well and they would be entirely happy". Halifax's conclusion, therefore, was "that the Germans had no policy of immediate adventure."

Chamberlain "expressed warm appreciation of Lord Halifax' effort."[79] He remarked that the visit was "a great success".[80] Differing from the description in his memoirs, Eden in fact "expressed great satisfaction with the way the Lord President had dealt with each point in his conversations with the Chancellor."[81] He thought that the visit was carried out completely in accordance with the line of the Government.[82]

Halifax's report offered a basis for the F.O.'s study and Eden summed up the result of their research,

> Hitler had now adopted the theme that a general settlement was not practical politics, that immediate negotiations between Great Britain and Germany were unnecessary, but that if Britain really wanted to improve relations, she could do so by satisfying German colonial claims. It was noticeable that Hitler had offered no guarantees about his policy in Central Europe.[83]

Chamberlain had a similar estimate as he told his sister that "I see clearly enough the lines on which we should aim at progress but the time required to arrive at satisfactory conclusions will be long and we must expect setbacks."[84] According to Oliver Harvey's Diaries, he and Eden "were in absolute agreement about Germany -- viz. no settlement except a general European settlement."[85]

In the mean time, Henderson sent back a series of telegrams, in which he advised that the Government should make an offer on the subject of colonies in order to start discussion with the Germans, and he had already told Dr Schmidt, Hitler's interpreter, that Halifax's visit constituted "a turning point from the old course on to a new one."

He conveyed the Germans' idea to the F.O. that "the next move must come from us."[86]

These despatches were received in the F.O. with furious criticism. Van. minuted, "We made this last move. ... they also expect us to make the next."[87] Another minute reads more sharply,

> Again and again Sir N. Henderson exceeds his functions and misunderstands the business of an Ambassador.[88]

Eden agreed to these criticisms and said, "I am inclined to think we might perhaps repeat our warning."[89] After Sargent sent a critical letter to Berlin, Eden himself warned Henderson in mid-December that the Ambassador must strictly follow the Government's policy, which had been described by Halifax to Hitler and by Chamberlain and himself to the French Ministers. Halifax's foregoing visit did not mean "a change in direction of the policy" towards Germany, and

> It would be a mistake, therefore, to give the German Government the impression that His Majesty's Government are impatient for some new initiative at this moment...[90]

3. Anglo-French Ministerial Conversations

Being interested in the information about Halifax's visit, the French showed their desire to meet the British Ministers.[91] On November 23, Eden had a talk with Chamberlain and both agreed to invite Delbos, French Foreign Minister, and Chautemps, Minister of France, to London.[92]

Conversations between British and French Ministers were held on the 29th - 30th. Halifax first told the French of his visit to Germany, and then Chamberlain supplemented that

> the Germans wanted two things, ... first, colonies; secondly, assurances about Central and Eastern Europe. If they could get what they required without giving anything for it, that would be for them the best solution. On the other hand, His Majesty's Government were not prepared to open discussions unless the Germans were prepared to discuss the things that His Majesty's Government wanted.

The French Ministers held the same attitude towards colonies and European appeasement.

As far as Central and Eastern Europe was concerned, Eden drew attention to the point that "neither France nor Great Britain had treaty engagements as regards

Austria." Chamberlain asked Delbos whether the treaty between France and Czechoslovakia would be brought into operation if Germany invaded Czechoslovakia. The French Foreign Minister replied that "if there were armed intervention by Germany, it was evident that the treaty would apply." He also emphasised that although there were no treaty engagements with Austria, "there were certain declarations such as that made at Stresa by which Great Britain and France and Italy asserted that the maintenance of the integrity and independence of Austria was a necessary element for European peace." Since the Italian attitude had changed, "France and Britain might manifest a certain solicitude". However, Eden pointed out that the Austrian question should not be dealt with in the same way as the Czech problem. The Prime Minister went further to stress that the British public opinion would not approve of Britain becoming "entangled in a war on account of Czechoslovakia". He agreed with Chautemps that they "could not request Czechoslovakia to grant autonomy to the *Sudetendeutsche*. He did not, in fact, believe that the Germans would go so far in their demands as that." Eden added with sympathy that "Sudeten Germans had certain grievances... the right course would be to impress upon the Czech Government the need for doing something... to meet the grievances of the Sudeten Germans".[93] In short, the French Ministers wanted to "press the British Ministers to adopt some more forthcoming attitude in Central Europe", but "No encouragement had been given to them".

In the end, both sides agreed that the right course in dealing with Central and Eastern Europe was "to interest ourselves in a spirit of conciliation"; and that that appropriate concessions might be made by Czecho-slovakia and that an attempt should be made to reach a general settlement with Germany." In addition, the better relations with Mussolini might have the effect of reviving his interest in Austria.[94]

On December 1, Eden informed the German Ambassador of the Anglo-French conversations, telling him that

> As regards Austria ... It had always been my view that Austria was even more an Italian interest than a French or British interest.[95]

4. Preparing The Formula for a Settlement

Although they decided not to rush into a general settlement with Germany, the British Government had never given up their efforts to work towards that end. In

late December, when the Cabinet discussed the *Interim Report on Defence Expenditure on Future Years*, Halifax said,

> that brought out clearly how the limitation imposed on defence by finance threw a heavy burden on to diplomacy. ... we were faced with the possibility of three enemies at once. ... we ought to make every possible effort to get on good terms with Germany. ... it was of great importance to make further progress in improving relations with Germany.

Being in accordance with Halifax, Eden thought that the first task was for the French Government and themselves to decide what could be done in the colonial sphere. Chamberlain agreed that "no further move could be made with Germany until after further explorations." He recalled that the preliminary consideration of the German contribution to a settlement "might take the form of some measure of disarmament."[96]

At Chamberlain's request,[97] the F.O. studied the colonial issue, and the report under Eden's name came to the same conclusion as Henderson had done. It says,

> The conversation between Lord Halifax and Herr Hitler showed that, if we wish for a general settlement with Germany, it will be for us, and not for the German Government, to take the next step by putting forward some concrete proposals ... It is important, if we are really anxious to prevent the hopes created by the recent conversations from evaporating, that there should be no long delay. We must keep moving; and we must try to make some further communication on the subject not only to the French Government, but also to the Germans, as soon as we possibly can.

Eden implied that the British Government could make a concession on the colonial issue, and in return, requested a general settlement with Germany. He advised the Committee to consider 1) what British colonial territories could be transferred to Germany, 2) what the term "general settlement" really meant.[98]

On January 8, Chamberlain met Joseph Avenol, the Secretary-General of the League at Hever Castle. The interview inspired the Prime Minister with "an idea" for further conversations with Germany:

> The notion which had been developing in his mind was the possibility of a solution by the adoption of an entirely new method of presenting the problem. His suggestion was that the matter should not be treated as a restoration to Germany of territory of which she had been deprived, but the opening of an entirely new chapter in the history of African colonial development to be introduced and accepted by the general agreement

> of the Powers interested in Africa. The new conception would be based on the complete equality of the Powers concerned and of their all being subjected to certain limitations in regard to the African territories to be administered by them under the scheme. Germany would be brought in to the arrangement by becoming one of the African Colonial Powers in question and by being given certain territories to administer.
>
> If this scheme could be put forward it would not be necessary, in the first instance, to discuss and settle what particular territories should be assigned to Germany, or what compensation (if any) should be given to those Powers which assigned territory to Germany.

He did not reveal the idea, which would "open up a hopeful prospect," to his colleagues until the 24th when the Committee meeting was held.[99]

On the 13th, with Wilson's participation, he worked out a principle for the F.O. to study further on the colonial issue:

> His Majesty's Government have realised that if such appeasement is to be achieved it will not be upon the basis of bargaining in which each side seeks to weigh up what it will get against what it will be asked to give. Our plan (both as regards Germany and Italy) rests upon the view that we and they are in a position each to make a contribution towards an objective we both desire to obtain. There would be no need to discuss whether our contribution were greater or less than theirs. What is needed is to ensure that the contribution of each will, taken with the contribution of the other, make up an agreement which will bring appeasement.

By this principle, if Britain contributed a concession of colonies, they would ask Germany to offer the assurances about the Western frontier and about Belgian neutrality; and no use of force against Austria or Czechoslovakia.[100]

On the 24th, the Cabinet Committee considered Eden's memo of January 1. Chamberlain admired it. He thought that a rapprochement with Germany was urgent because some time had elapsed since Halifax's visit and Germany might think that Britain had abandoned their original intention. Another reason was that before the opening of the Anglo-Italian conversations, the British Government needed to show their efforts to secure a general appeasement by conversations not with Italy alone but also with Germany. He then told the Committee of his "new method" concerning the colonial issue, which was "promptly & even enthusiastically" accepted.

In the course of discussion, Ormsby-Gore, Colonies Secretary, said that "the longer we waited the higher was the price that we should have to pay and that the

granting to Germany of some concessions now in West Africa would heal a running sore and effect a permanent settlement." Chamberlain concluded that "time should not be lost ... the Germans could be told we were ready to discuss." Based on his instruction, the Cabinet Committee decided that Eden should consult Henderson about the formula.[101] The telegram to Henderson was drafted by Cadogan and approved both by Eden and Chamberlain.[102]

On the following day, Eden prepared a memo, according to the principle formulated by Chamberlain, to estimate what offer might come from Germany for "general appeasement". As to Central and East Europe, he thought that no further consideration had been given to the suggestion that Germany might renew to Britain and France the undertaking she had given as regards Austria in the German-Austrian Agreement of July 1936. In addition, "some lesser form of autonomy should be granted to the *Sudetendeutsch*," and "in return Czech independence should be guaranteed by one or more of the great Powers".[103] On the same day, he went to Geneva.

Meanwhile, Chamberlain summoned Henderson back to London for consultation, and asked the Ambassador to tell the Germans that "he returned to take part in work engaged for following up Halifax's conversation."[104] On February 3, Henderson attended the meeting of the Cabinet Committee and gave the Ministers his forecast of Nazi reaction to the British formula. He informed them that the German Government would certainly not be satisfied unless they were granted some territory over which they could exercise full sovereign rights and call their own colonies. Germany would agree to "some form of limitation of armaments", but she would not return to the League until the Covenant had been modified. He told the Ministers that the problem of Czechoslovakia might be solved if Germany made a long-term agreement with her, while the German Government refused to give any promise to Austria.[105] After the meeting, instructions to the Ambassador were drafted and circulated to the Committee members. Simon and Halifax put forward some revising points,[106] and the final draft was sent by Eden to Henderson on February 12. The Foreign Secretary instructed that the Ambassador should inform the Germans that the British Government were ready to discuss with the German Government on all issues which had been referred to during Halifax's visit to Germany. "Mention should be made of

Czecho-slovakia and Austria as illustrative of the general principle of collaboration."[107]

Meanwhile, however, due to personnel changes in the German Government[108] and Hitler's forthcoming speech on the 20th, Henderson suggested on February 7 that it would be a mistake to make an approach until things had settled down "after recent convulsions".[109] It seemed that Eden was at first inclined to agree, but other senior officials such as Van. Cadogan, Sargent and Strang were in favour of making a communication to Hitler before his forthcoming speech on the grounds that during the period in which Hitler was preparing his speech he should know what H.M.G. were prepared to offer.[110] Eden then took their view. At the Cabinet meeting of February 9, he explained to his colleagues "that it would be inadvisable to wait, as, if no further approach were made, Herr Hitler might express disappointment that nothing had been done to follow up the Lord President's visit." Chamberlain's view, however, was closer to Henderson's. Halifax draw up a compromise plan that Henderson should consult Ribbentrop, the new Foreign Minister, first as to whether it would be advisable for him to ask for an interview with Hitler before the 20th. If the reply was negative, the Ambassador might ask Ribbentrop to tell Hitler that H.M.G were ready to take the next step as soon as the Chancellor was ready to receive him. This proposal met with considerable support, while Eden seemed very impatient and insisted on "the minimum that the Ambassador ought to say was that he was available for a further conversations."[111]

IV. BRITISH POLICY-MAKING DURING THE ANSCHLUSS

1. Repercussions of the Hitler-Schuschnigg Meeting at Berchtesgaden

It was apparent that without consultation of the House the Government had completed policy-making long before public opinion focused on the Austrian problem owing to Hitler's stormy interview with Schuschnigg on February 12. The disturbing news about the Berchtesgaden meeting was not revealed until the 15th. When the story emerged that day, the *News Chronicle* described, "from the very start of the interview Chancellor Schuschnigg found himself subjected to great pressure. ... At times the discussion was extremely blunt." Whereas *The Times* carefully avoided strong wording and reported, "Hitler used the plainest language in stating his

demands and it is understood that he indicated grave consequences if they were not accepted. ... It is understood that he recommended compliance to Herr von Schuschnigg in the most emphatic terms, and expressed the view that the Austrian Government had no backing to hope for in any third quarter if they were obdurate." Gedye, Vienna Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* gave more details,

> The Fuhrer went so far -- and I can assert this positively, in the face of any subsequent denials -- as to threaten that in the case of disorders in Austria, he would 'march', being unable to resist any longer the pleas of the 'downtrodden German population in Austria'. ... Actually -- as I am able again to assert without fear of contradiction -- Herr Hitler delivered an ultimatum.

Whatever the extent of the criticism, the general tone of the Press showed that Austria was a closed case, and that it was impossible for the Western Powers to declare war on Germany over this.[112]

In the House, however, the Opposition "tried to make a major issue out of British policy towards Austria", and Attlee led a move to "jog the Government into action."[113] On the 16th, Mr Arthur Henderson, Labour MP, asked, "Will His Majesty's Government stand by the joint declaration of February 1934 to the effect that they reaffirmed the interest of this country in the integrity and independence of Austria?" Eden, who was still Foreign Secretary, did not answer the question directly, only saying that the Stresa Powers needed to consult each other, they were waiting for Italian consultation.[114]

On the following day, the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House discussed the situation with the attendance of one hundred MPs. Opening the discussion, Harold Nicolson, National Labour Member for West Leicester, appealed to the Committee to "face the fact that adventurism is now in the ascendant in Germany, and the cautious people have been proved to have been wrong." Churchill, in support of his argument, took a firmer attitude and declared, "we must call a halt." The whole feeling of the meeting, as Nicolson observed, "is very different from that of a year ago. They no longer believe that we can buy Germany off with concessions."[115] This accorded with the report of Franckenstein, the Austrian Minister in Britain, in which he wrote that

> a number of Members of Parliament have reexamined their views on Central Europe and found that England could not only not keep aloof from the impending chaos, but would even have to collaborate vigorously in the solution of this problem. People have come to

> understand that England is bound to intervene not only in the case of an unprovoked attack upon Austria or Czechoslovakia, but also in case revolts should be engineered by the N.S.D.A.P. in these two countries.[116]

However, official reaction to public opinion was very ambivalent. Before the story of Berchtesgaden broke, Eden addressed the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House on December 9, 1937,

> His general line is that there is no imminent likelihood of war and a far better prospect of appeasement than ever before. He draws attention to several favourable factors, such as the progress of our rearmament, the fact that Spain has ceased to be a real source of danger, ...

As regards Central Europe, he prevaricated, saying, "we cannot disinterest ourselves and will enter into commitments". From Nicolson's Diary, we know that Eden successfully deceived his audience by misleading them.[117]

In fact, as early as during Halifax's visit to Germany, a new initiative was arranged to curb the press. In their interview of November 21, Goebbels complained that the British press attacked Hitler. Halifax promised him that he would consult Chamberlain and Eden "with a view to seeing what could be done to secure the cooperation of the British Press particularly with regard to the question of personal attacks on Herr Hitler." He told the German Propaganda Minister that it was necessary "for the Press to create the right atmosphere".[118] As soon as he came back he took a series of steps, as he wrote to Henderson:

> I have seen Steward, the Prime Minister's Press Adviser at No. 10, and discussed ways and means with him, and have also had a personal talk on the subject with Lord Southwood (of Odhams Press – Author) who controls the *Daily Herald* and Sir Walter Layton of the *News Chronicle*. The *Daily Herald* had a very objectionable cartoon on Wednesday and I immediately wrote to Southwood following our interview and have had a reply of a character which gives one to hope that we shall not have reason to complain again of this sort of thing.[119]

However, in the face of the public being alarmed by the news about the Berchtesgaden meeting. Oliver Harvey recorded, "the Government ... took every possible step to secure the London papers. ... The B.B.C, was told to say nothing that night about Germany and Italy." On February 28, Halifax (now the Foreign Secretary) saw Reith, Director of the BBC, and asked him "not to proceed with a series of talks on ... the German Colonies." Reith asked Halifax "pointblank whether

H.M.G. wished him to stop them". Halifax replied, "that was so but he would deny it if challenged in public!"[120] Chamberlain tried to cool the public by telling the House on the eve of the Anschluss (March 2),

> it hardly seems possible to maintain from the juridical point of view that because these two statesmen agreed that certain changes were desirable in the interests of the relations between their two countries, the one country had alienated its independence to the other country.[121]

In fact, information received in the F.O. was far from reassuring. On February 15, the Austrian Chancellor told Palairet, the British Ambassador in Vienna, that "he had been met by threats" in his interview with Hitler, but "had yielded the minimum." Schuschnigg hoped that the Western Powers would make Germany know that Austria had gone to "the limits of conciliation." He was convinced that "absorption of Austria by Germany must lead to war."[122] In Paris, Delbos summoned up Phipps, the British Ambassador, and said, the French Government "strongly favour making some communication to German Government showing interest that the British and French Governments take in events in Austria and in the maintenance of peace and tranquillity in Central Europe." Two days later, he told the Ambassador that he greatly feared that sounding on the colonial question at this moment "would give the impression to Germany that both Great Britain and France were unduly weak and unduly impressed by German violence."[123]

When the Vienna telegrams were considered at a meeting of the 15th in the F.O. Cadogan, Oliver Harvey, Eden's Private Secretary, and others thought that the Anschluss was sooner or later inevitable and they could not help. Cadogan personally wished "Germany would swallow Austria and get it over." Van., however, advised that Henderson should ask Hitler that the British Government "wanted to know what was going on about Austria". Cadogan got his suggestion "watered down to 'include Austria'" Chamberlain "watered it down further" because, as Cadogan described, "what is the good of brandishing Austria under Hitler's nose when we can't do anything about it?"[124] Eden, in Harvey's words, was "determined not to get into the false position of giving the Austrians advice and then being saddled with the responsibility if they accept advice and the situation gets worse. We cannot fight for Austria and we must be careful not to raise false hopes in Vienna."[125] Strang,

however, was very angry that Hitler said Halifax had approved of Germany's attitude towards Austria, and suggested

> that we should warn Herr Hitler that he must not quote H.M.G., in the person of Lord Halifax, as approving of his designs on Austria.

But Halifax was reluctant to make a complaint because he did not want to spoil the attempt to approach Germany:

> We clearly have every right to make our position plain -- provided Schuschnigg agrees -- & will stick to his guns above having said it. I obviously couldn't approve Germany's attitude when I did not know what it was. But if the matter is taken up, I hope it may be so handled as not to prejudice the other side of our policy -- i.e. the broad question of getting onto closer terms with the gangsters.

After further discussion, the decision says, "No action was taken on this."[126] The instruction to Vienna was drafted with the approval of Eden and Chamberlain as follows:

> we should not put ourselves into the position of making suggestions which, if accepted or rejected, produced a major crisis of which we could be accused of being the authors.[127]

As to the French suggestion, Eden was "extremely doubtful of the wisdom of any separate or joint communication to the German Government by the British and French Ambassadors in Berlin" because Henderson was authorised to inform Hitler that "His Majesty's Government were considering what steps might be taken to bring about a measure of appeasement which would include *inter alia* Austria." The Foreign Secretary therefore instructed Phipps on the 16th, "we do not intend ourselves to go further than this, and we should deprecate any Anglo-French warning or protest in Berlin."[128]

On the same day, the Cabinet assembled to discuss the Austrian situation. Halifax recalled that his general impression had been that the Fuhrer would continue his activities with regard to Austria, but in a manner which did not enable any other country to interfere. Chamberlain thought that "Hitler wanted peace but at his own price." Eden told the Minister that "he did not want to put himself in a position of suggesting a resistance which he could not, in fact, furnish.[129]

Just two days before Eden's resignation, the French again delivered messages suggesting that it was "illogical and even dangerous" at that moment to start

conversation with Germany. They wanted a joint *demarche* of protest against the German Government on the following line:

> (1) that the legitimate anxiety of Doctor Schuschnigg to safeguard Austrian independence will not, in the opinion of Great Britain and France, allow him to go any further;
> (2) that the real and not merely verbal independence of Austria constitutes one of the major interests of European peace, and that the British and French Governments could not be indifferent spectators of any new attempts destined to destroy it.
> (3) that in general we cannot tolerate any coup de main or act of war likely to bring into question the territorial status quo in Central Europe, and that in that case these events would meet with opposition on the part of the Western Powers.[130]

Tense minutes in the F.O. led to the conclusion that the reaction to the French proposal must be negative. Strang said, the French "put up proposals which go well beyond what they themselves are willing (or in a position) to perform, and will place the responsibility for inaction upon us. ... neither we nor the French possess the offensive power sufficient to prevent Germany from working her will in Central Europe". Sargent and Cadogan agreed. The latter summed up, "the time for talking about Austria has gone by." A reply was discussed at a meeting between Halifax, Cadogan, Plymouth (Parliamentary Under-Secretary) and Ingram (Counsellor in the F.O.) on February 22, and examined by the Cabinet on the 25th. Based on the Cabinet conclusion, the F.O. prepared a memo to tell the French that their suggestion

> if held in Berlin, might, if it became known in Vienna, only mislead the Austrian Chancellor by encouraging his hopes for military support from France and Great Britain, which is unlikely to be forthcoming.
>
> The language suggested by the French Government implies a readiness on the part of the French and British Governments to have recourse to war in order to assert their will. ... His Majesty's Government have refused to undertake a decision which in present circumstances they are unable to reverse.

They made their adversion plain to their French colleagues:

> His Majesty's Government contemplate following up Lord Halifax's visit by initiating further conversations through the diplomatic channel with the German Chancellor, in the course of which it is hoped to ascertain how far the German Government are prepared to go in making a concrete contribution in respect of Central Europe and disarmament. These conversations would make it clear to the German Government that in the view of His Majesty's Government recent

> events have aroused apprehensions in many quarters which must inevitably render more difficult the negotiation of a general settlement, and that a general appeasement depends on the restoration and maintenance of confidence and stability in Austria and Czechoslovakia.[131]

At the same time, the Cabinet instructed Henderson to carry out the proposal put forward before Eden's resignation.[132] Some telegrams even repeated Eden's instructions.[133]

On March 3, Henderson had a conversation with the Fuhrer. Hitler turned down immediate Anglo-German conversations by saying that the colonial question was not ripe for settlement and "it would be better to wait for a few years." His remarks on Austria were that he proposed to "proceed with his declared policy regardless of consequences." As regards the Czechs, his view was that present situation was "intolerable and must be modified by negotiation or by dictation".[134] In the Ambassador's opinion, it was very difficult "finding a common basis for reasonable discussion." However, he did not believe "that at this stage Hitler is thinking in terms of the Anschluss".[135] Despite warning Germany, he told Hitler that he personally advocated the Anschluss.[136] Following the line set by Eden but continued by Halifax, Henderson let the Germans know that "we had, in short, washed our hands of Austria, except to express a wish for 'reasonable solutions reasonably achieved' ".[137]

2. The Anschluss

Although Hitler did not want to come to terms immediately, the British Government was still prepared to push things further during the forthcoming visit of Ribbentrop to London. At the Cabinet meeting of March 9, Halifax (now Foreign Secretary) suggested, as to the line to be adopted for the future interview, that, since the Germans did not want to tie their hands by talks, he should show the German Foreign Minister "a mixture of disappointment, reproach and warning." In spite of this, he would say,

> that the Government would at any time be ready to join the German Government in an attempt to realise an understanding. ... We had no desire to block any peaceful agreements arrived at by peaceful means. We had not tried to block the German policy in Austria, ... His general line, therefore, was not to give the Germans the impression that we were running but to show that we were not shutting the door.

In the course of discussion, admiring Halifax's suggestion, Chamberlain pointed out that "it was not proposed to say that this was the last opportunity." As to the German threat to Austria and Czechoslovakia, Maugham, the Lord Chancellor, said that they should remind the Germans that "the German nation was pledged by the Treaty of Paris". Hoare supplemented that "if Germany invaded Austria or Czecho-slovakia they raised dangers in Europe of which the end could not be foreseen."[138]

That very day, news came from Vienna that Schuschnigg had decided, as the last measure to maintain the independence of Austria, to hold a plebiscite on the 13th,[139] which caused a "storm" in Germany.[140] Halifax warned Ribbentrop, who was now in London, that "if once war should start in Central Europe, it was quite impossible to say where it might not end, or who might not become involved."[141] He also instructed Henderson to speak to Hitler on the same lines.[142]

On March 11, German troops were moving towards the Austrian border.[143] Due to pressure from ultimatums both by Austrian Nazi leader and by Germany, Schuschnigg had to cancel the plebiscite and consider resignation. He asked immediate advice of H.M.G. because "if he yields, any semblance of Austrian independence is gone."[144] After receiving this information, Cadogan showed the details to Chamberlain at a luncheon-party for Ribbentrop. The Prime Minister urged Ribbentrop to repeat to Hitler the serious view the British Government took of these latest developments in Austria.[145] But in fact, nobody wanted to fight for Austria.[146]

Based on the result of discussions in the F.O. that day, Halifax telegraphed Vienna in the afternoon that he could not advise Schuschnigg to "take any action which might expose his country to dangers against which His Majesty's Government are unable to guarantee protection".[147] Regarding the French enquiry on March 12 that if the Western Powers should bring the Austrian question before the League, Halifax instructed Phipps to give them a negative answer.[148]

On the other hand, Vienna's appeal to France and Italy failed too because the French Government had just resigned on March 10; Italy, however, did not even want to communicate with the Western Powers over the Austrian problem.[149] Since the Austrian President refused to accept the German ultimatum, German troops moved into Austria on the night of the 11th -12th.[150]

World opinion was profoundly shocked by the lightning Anschluss. In Britain, most newspapers including *The Times* seriously condemned the German action. Although it agreed that the Anschluss should be accepted with acquiescence, *The Times* was dismayed by Hitler's surprise. The leading articles, keeping the same line as the Government, pointed out that "the indignation of the world is not at the thing he has done, but at the manner of the doing." Hitler's violation was not compatible with the policy of appeasement. The *News Chronicle* put forward the alternative to appeasement, namely, to restore the collapsed collective security system around Czechoslovakia. Germany must be told that further aggression would be met with an overwhelming solidarity of resistance.[151] The *New Statesman* also agreed that the best hope of checking Germany lay in Churchill's proposal of a Grand Alliance.[152] The Press had a tendency to emphasise the future danger, particularly the case of Czechoslovakia rather than that of Austria, which seemed too late to fight for.

On March 14, the Cabinet received a note from the Opposition, which demanded a debate. In order to cope with public opinion and to discuss the situation, Chamberlain summoned the Cabinet meeting twice on the 12th and 14th. At the first meeting, Halifax suggested that there were two points, which must be considered: 1) what steps should be taken to guide public opinion, 2) how they were to prevent similar action being taken in Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain pointed out that

> The manner in which the German action in Austria had been brought about was most distressing and shocking to the world and as a typical illustration of power politics. ... There was little doubt that Hitler would represent it as another illustration of peaceful methods. ... he believed that what had happened was inevitable unless the Powers had been able to say 'If you make war on Austria you will have to deal with us'.

But he thought that "at any rate the question was now out of the way." He told his colleagues that "there was probably not very much that could be done."[153] However, they all realised that the Government must make its stand point clear to the public when the Prime Minister spoke in the House on the 14th. At the second meeting, describing to his colleagues the general lines of a statement, Halifax consulted them on "how far it would be wise to include in the statement on policy a condemnation of the German attitude". In favour of the stronger language the Cabinet were reminded that they "had already made a protest" to the Germans, and it seemed proper "to

express strong views", reflecting the deep concern of public opinion; and also "if this was not done it would facilitate the adoption by the Germans of similar forcible action towards Czechoslovakia." On the other hand, in favour of the milder language it was pointed out that "it was important to avoid giving the impression that we were on the brink of war. It was equally important to avoid exacerbating the situation or giving an impression of threats which we were not in a position to carry out; and that the general public would be much more concerned with what action the Government proposed to take to develop our own defences than in verbal condemnation of Herr Hitler." Chamberlain suggested that "the condemnation should be applied to the methods used by Herr Hitler and the shock that had been given to world confidence by those methods." This met the general agreement and the draft statement was prepared by Chamberlain and Halifax.[154]

When the debate took place on the 14th, Mr Attlee pointed out that "this event knocks down the house of cards which the Prime Minister has been building." He asked the Government, "What is your policy now?" He warned,

> What we need to-day is not an attempt to build peace by separate bargainings with separate dictators, separate attempts to buy off aggression. We need a return to League principles and League policy. ... our Government should take the lead in proposing means for preventing a further descent into lawlessness.[155]

Amery, however, did not appeal to save Austria because that country "was not prepared to fight" for her independence, but he demanded a definite answer from the Government on the Czechoslovakia problem, which was to be a major concern of the future.[156] Mr Churchill delivered a powerful speech:

> We await the further statement of the Government, but it is quite clear that we cannot accept as a final solution of the problem of Central Europe the event which occurred on 11th March. ... We cannot say 'The past is the past' without surrendering the future.

In support of the Opposition leaders' view, he put forward his plan for a "Grand Alliance":

> If a number of States were assembled around Great Britain and France in a solemn treaty for mutual defence against aggression; if they had their forces marshalled in what you may call a grand alliance; if they had their staff arrangements concerted; if all this rested, as it can honourably rest, upon the Covenant of the League of Nations, agreeable with all the purposes and ideals of the League of Nations; if

> that were sustained, as it would be, by the moral sense of the world; and if it were done in the year 1938 -- and, believe me, it may be the last chance there will be for doing it -- then I say that you might even now arrest this approaching war.[157]

The critics could never change Chamberlain's mind. In his statement, the Prime Minister tried to blind the public to what the proposed line might be. He condemned the German "violent methods" on one hand, and refused to "take action *vis-a-vis* Austria" on the other. He did not make it clear whether his policy had been dashed by Hitler's action:

> While the policy of appeasement would lead to a relaxation of the economic pressure ... what has just occurred must inevitably retard economic recovery and, indeed, increased care will be required to ensure that marked deterioration does not set in.

As to preventing future aggression against Czechoslovakia, he avoided giving a direct answer, but only quoted Goering's assurance to that country, which stated that "it would be the earnest endeavour of the German Government to improve German-Czech relations."[158]

The Prime Minister's statement did not quell criticism. Harold Nicolson wrote in his Diary of March 15,

> that the Government have betrayed the country and that the Tories think only of the Red danger and let the Empire slide. I am in grave doubts as to my own position. How can I continue to support a Government like this?[159]

However, Chamberlain did not want to change his policy in spite of criticism. On the contrary, he told his colleagues at FPC meeting on the same day that "recent events had confirmed him in his opinion that the policy was the right one and he only regretted that it had not been adopted earlier".[160]

V. COMMENT

Austria had in fact been doomed when the appeasers abandoned the Rhineland. Appeasement helped Hitler to realise his aggressive plan much earlier than he estimated (by 1943-45). Contemporary politicians and scholars comment on the Anschluss unanimously as an upset of the balance of power in Europe and the first step of Hitler's serious invasion.[161] However, Hoare argues, "there was no chance of

stopping Hitler except by war or a threat of war, and neither we nor the French were prepared to fight against what was claimed to be the unification of the German people."[162]

It was perhaps true that stopping Hitler from annexing Austria was much more difficult than driving him out of the Rhineland. But it was not a case of "no chance". If the British Government had followed the French suggestion of manifesting a "solicitude" from the very beginning, and made a joint protest to Germany for Austria's independence before the Anschluss, the situation might have been different because the firm attitude of the Western Powers would have strengthened the position of Hitler's opposing generals, who warned the Fuhrer that "Germany was not in a position to undertake the risk of a major conflict."[163] This would have certainly discouraged Hitler, or at least made it not so easy for him to win.

The British leaders' mistake over the loss of Austria was two-fold: firstly, after the Rhineland episode, the British questionnaire was shelved by Hitler and his appeal of a twenty-five-year non-aggression pact and air pact was obviously a empty promise. All this did not open the appeasers' eyes to Hitler's real ambitions. They tried to fool themselves into believing that Hitler would not strike in Austria immediately and would not go so far as to demand autonomy for *the Sudetendeutsche*. Without any assurance of future settlement from Hitler after his violation of Lorcarno, and without any knowledge of the dictator's real intentions in Central and Eastern Europe, they were under the illusion that general agreement would be reached by offering Germany some colonies. In order to attract Hitler's interest in a general settlement, Halifax and Henderson had revealed to the Fuhrer in their interviews that Britain would acquiesce in the change in Central and Eastern Europe as long as it took place "upon the basis of reasonable agreements reasonably reached". They failed to give any definition about what "reasonable" really meant, nor did they dare to answer what they should do if Hitler made changes by *unreasonable* means. Historical fact demonstrates that it was the British leaders, not Hitler, who were always guessing what would happen next, because the Fuhrer was quite sure that whatever he did, Britain would not interfere.

Secondly, although they realised from the Anschluss that Hitler would practise the same method in the future, they summed up the lessons wrongly. Cadogan wrote on March 16,

> I shall be called 'cowardly' but after days and nights of thinking, I have come to the conclusion that is the least bad. We *must* not precipitate a conflict now -- we shall be smashed. It *may* not be better later,...[164]

Chamberlain told his colleagues that the present incident had confirmed him in his belief that appeasement was right and he only regretted that it had not been adopted earlier. Therefore, if the Rhineland caused the ripening of appeasement towards Germany, the Anschluss hastened and extended this process.

In this period, the Far Eastern pin-prick still diverted the policy-makers' attention while they wanted to concentrate on the dangers nearer home. In Europe, facing the two "storm centres" of Berlin and Rome, Chamberlain followed a very peculiar course: if he could make friends with Italy, the Stresa Front would be restored to deter German adventures in Central Europe; on the other hand, if he could buy Hitler off, Mussolini would not dare to attack Britain single-handedly. As the result of this logic, instead of fighting against the aggressive powers, Britain tried to rope them in. His proposal was based on an assumption that the French strength and American support were not reliable, and that successful appeasement would reduce expenditure on rearmament.

Under Chamberlain's leadership, Eden formulated the policy of "keeping Germany guessing" to hold the situation while preparation for negotiation with Germany was under process. It is true that he declared that "we were interested in events in Central Europe" [165] rather than that Britain disinterested herself in that area as Henderson suggested. However, the two intimations were no different from each other in the face of Hitler's strike. The British Government did not do anything at all for Austria except that they discouraged the French from taking any joint action. In spite of their conflicting ideas over the Italian problem, Eden and Chamberlain were completely in accord over policy towards Germany. If Eden had not resigned, he would not have favoured British action to help Austria either. Therefore, their divergence was a difference between appeasers rather than between appeaser and anti-appeaser. Although he resigned before the Anschluss, Eden should bear an equal responsibility with Chamberlain for misleading British foreign policy.

Policy-makers made every effort to deceive and "guide" public opinion rather than listen to it. Without consulting the public, they had hatched policy long before the public discussed the Austria crisis intensively. Public opinion was misled by the Government's promise that Britain never disinterested herself from Central and Eastern Europe without exploring the implications. However, the event of the Anschluss alarmed the public. Although it perhaps did not demand war on Germany, public opinion generally hardened towards Hitler's expansion, particularly his possible invasion of Czechoslovakia in the future. MPs like Harold Nicolson, who had held a conciliatory attitude a year before, no longer believed that Hitler could be bought off. The opposition not only criticised the Government's appeasement, but they also put forward their alternative proposals such as a suggestion of "return to League principles" and Churchill's "Grand Alliance". All this showed that public opinion had been more mature than before due to the experience of a series of events. It demonstrated a great moral and social strength, which could be used to enforce the peace front. However, the policy-makers' determination for appeasement made it impossible.

After the Anschluss, the appeasers had no card left to play when they found that Hitler did not even play the same game. Condemning the means used by the Germans to annex Austria, Chamberlain in fact acquiesced in the Anschluss. This was tantamount to implying that Hitler could do whatever he wanted towards the Czechs in the future. Indeed, success of the Anschluss encouraged the Sudeten Germans to press for Hitler's forthcoming annexation of Czechoslovakia.[166] That country had now been surrounded by Germany on three sides, which made it militarily impossible, in the appeasers' view, to save her. The unhappy consequence of appeasement convinced them that they had to appease Hitler continuously, quickly and thoroughly, and this paved the way for German invasion of Czechoslovakia.

1 Gehl, J., *Austria, Germany, and The Anschluss 1931-1938*, London 1963, p.53.
2 *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918 - 1945*, C-III, Nos. 115, 119.
3 von Papen, Franz, *Memoirs*, London 1952, pp.340-342; DGFP C-III, N167; Gehl, p.102.
4 DGFP D-I, N152.
5 Churchill, W., *The Gathering Storm*, London 1948, p.202; Robertson, E., *Hitler's Pre-war Policy and Military Plan*, London 1963, p.91 & note 1; DGFP D-I, pp.433-434.
6 Gehl, p.116 note 6 & p.117
7 DGFP C-IV, Nos. 579, 603
8 ibid, N485
9 Muggeridge (ed.), *Ciano's Diplomatic Papers*, London 1948, pp.56-60; DGFP C-V, N624
10 DGFP C-III, N555.
11 DGFP D-I, N31
12 Schmidt, P., *Hitler's Interpreter*, London 1950, pp.76-77
13 DGFP D-I, Nos. 50, 59.
14 ibid, N19. However, Hitler's strategy was not popular among his generals, nor with his Foreign Minister. After this meeting, Neurath discussed with Generals Fritsch and Beck as to what could be done "to get Hitler to change his ideas."[Shirer, *Rise & Fall of the Third Reich*, London 1961, pp. 309-310.] In the face of opposition, Hitler made "sweeping changes in the German hierarchy" in early February 1938. They included the resignation of the War Minister, General Blomberg (precipitated by his marriage), and General Fritsch, Commander in Chief of the army. Hitler himself took over the War Ministry and the Command of the army. Ribbentrop replaced Neurath as the Foreign Minister. [DBFP 2nd-XIX, N492 note 1, N496; Brook-Shepherd, *Anschluss: The Rape of Austria*, London 1963, pp.30-32.]
15 Papen, pp.380-381; DGFP D-I, N273.
16 Gehl, p.166.
17 Shirer, pp.325-330; DGFP D-I, Nos 294, 295; DBFP 2nd-XIX, Nos. 513, 516, 517.
18 DGFP D-I, N340.
19 ibid, N328.
20 ibid, Nos. 132, 133, 138, 147. Henderson later explained, "I never said that I had spoken here in favor of the Anschluss. What I did say was that I had sometimes expressed personal views which may not have been entirely in accordance with those of my Government. [ibid, N139.]
21 ibid, N339 & p.568.
22 Middlemas & Barnes, *Baldwin: A Biography*, London 1969, pp.926, 929-931, 962-965; Avon., *Facing the Dictators*, London 1962, pp.403, 445, 479; Templewood, *Nine Troubled Years*, London 1954, pp.26, 223.
23 Feiling, K., *Life of Neville Chamberlain*, London 1946, pp. 303, 305; Templewood, pp.37, 257; Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, London 1948, p.173.
24 Templewood, pp.36, 259-260; Birkenhead, *Halifax*, London 1965, p.422.
25 Once, in front of Eden, Sir Austin, Chamberlain's half-brother said, "Neville, you must remember you don't know anything about foreign affairs". [Avon, p.445] Cadogan remarked in his Diaries that Eden was unlucky in his chiefs, "Chamberlain took too much." [Dilks, D. (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan 1938-1945*, London 1971, p.54]
26 Feiling, p. 324.
27 ibid, pp.311, 456.
28 Since the end of 1936, Eden and Baldwin had considered some new appointment for Van. because his position had been shaken by the Abyssinian crisis. Early in 1937 Eden told Oliver Harvey, his private secretary, "about his lack of confidence in Van's judgement" and belief that he was no longer "in a fit state of health for his work." In the autumn, Eden finally decided that Cadogan was to be PUS and created the new office of Chief Diplomatic Adviser for Van. Chamberlain supported this decision and he himself informed Van of the appointment [Harvey, J. (ed.) *The Diplomatic Diaries of Oliver Harvey 1937-1940*, London 1970, p.22; Avon., p.521; DBFP 2nd-XVII, p.xiv; XIX, N408 note 2.]

It was generally accepted that Van. was "kicked upstairs" because he did not agree with Government's policy towards the dictator powers. [Colvin, I., *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, London 1971, p. 264 footnote 1; Rose, N. *Vansittart: Study of A Diplomat, London 1978*, pp.206-207; Avon, pp. 447, 448, 576; DGFP D-I, N95.] However, as we have discussed in the last chapter "Hitler's First Coup", there was no fundamental difference between his policy and the Government's. In fact, many of Cabinet's decisions were based on his proposals recommended by Eden. The reason for his losing power and influence resulted from his poor relationship with his colleagues, as Eden said, "Van had been a long time in his post and he was becoming ineffective -- no longer getting along with the other heads of Departments in Whitehall." [Colvin, *Vansittart in Office*, London 1965, p.149; Avon, p.521.]

Other solid evidence can be found from his colleagues' comments, which were negative and controversial. For example, Eden generally took Van.'s proposal as basis of policy-making, but he wrote in his memoirs, "I have never known one to compare with Sir Robert as a relentless, not say ruthless, worker for the views he held strongly himself. The truth is that Vansittart was seldom an official giving cool and disinterested advice based on study and experience. He was himself a sincere, almost fanatical, crusader, and much more a Secretary of State in mentality than a permanent official." [Avon., p.242.] Cadogan remarked, "if he has any ideas or impressions, why can't he put them down straight on paper, instead of dancing literary hornpipes?" "He pretends to be very slick and cute but I can't see that he does, or has any idea of doing, *anything*." [*Cadogan's Diaries*, p.13.] However, Sir Warren Fisher, the head of the Civil Service, asked Lady Vansittart at a party to persuade her husband "not to write these long papers for the Cabinet. They don't like it. ... He's exceeding his functions." [*Vansittart in Office*, pp.147-148.] Remove of Van. was not only welcomed by his colleagues, but also by his bosses. Chamberlain told his sister that "After all these months that S[tanley] B[aldwin] wasted in futile attempts to push Van out of the FO it is amazing to record that I have done it in 3 days."[DBFP 2nd-XIX, N408 note 2; Middlemas, *Diplomacy of Illusion: The British Government and Germany 1937-39*, London 1972, p.78.]

It is fair to say that not being a "yes-man", Van spoke out over his distrust of dictators. His dismissal indicated that Chamberlain's Government did not tolerate any kind of opposite view within their circle.

29 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.66

30 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.29; Robbins, (ed.) *The Blackwell Biographical Dictionary of British Political Life in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford 1990, p.77. Chamberlain said, "when Anthony can work out his ideas with a sane, slow man, like Alick Cadogan, he will be much steadier." [Middlemas, p. 78.]

31 *Cadogan's Diaries*, pp. 47, 62, 63.

32 *Vansittart in Office*, p.199; Gilbert & Gott, *The Appeasers*, London 1963, pp.68-69, 359; Halifax, *Fulness of Days*, London 1957, p.231; Templewood, pp.260-261; DGFP D-I, N128.

33 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N433 & Appendix I.

34 ibid, N79 note 1, Nos. 115, 484, 493; Avon., pp.572-573.

35 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N410, Appendix I p.1139; Templewood, p.258.

36 Halifax, pp.193-195; Birkenhead, pp.379-380. Their divergence, as Eden said in his resignation speech, was "not of aim, but of outlook", which implied that he resigned due to "a matter of procedure rather than a major part of policy." [H.C. Deb. 5s Vol.332, cols 45-50; Peters, *Anthony Eden at The Foreign Office 1931 - 1938*, New York 1986, p.360.]

37 DGFP D-I, Nos. 120, 127; Brook-Shepherd, pp.82, 93; Nicolson, H., (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1930-1939*, London 1966, pp. 319-320.

38 Eden was far from an unequivocal opponent of the Government's policy because even after his resignation he held an idea of rejoining the Cabinet, and kept attempting this all the time until the outbreak of war when he was offered a post as Dominions Secretary in the War Cabinet. [Carlton, D., *Anthony Eden*, London 1981, pp. 132-153; *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, pp. 249, 256-257, 279-280, 284-286, 295, 299, 305.] During the Munich crisis, he visited Halifax on September 11, expressing "complete agreement with the line taken."

[Cab 23/95 37(38); *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.175.] When Chamberlain came back from Munich, Eden saluted him, "We all owe him and every citizen owes him a measureless debt of gratitude for the sincerity and pertinacity which he had devoted in the final phase of the crisis to averting the supreme calamity of war." [H.C. Debts. 5s Vol. 339, col. 78, Oct. 3, 1938.] Therefore, Eden's resignation by no means rubbed out his reputation as an arch-appeaser.

39 Feiling, pp. 305, 339, 398; Robbins, *British Political Life*, pp.224-225; *Cadogan's Diaries*, pp.54, 105-106; Birkenhead, pp. 364, 381, 418-420; Cab23/95 43(38).

40 Avon., p.504; *Vansittart in Office*, p.146.

41 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N334 note 5; *Harold Nicolson's Diaries*, p. 334.

42 Cab 23/95 37(38); Cooper, Duff, *Old Men Forget*, London 1953, p.227.

43 FPC usually included the Inner Cabinet Members such as Chamberlain, Halifax, Simon, Hoare and some other principal ministers. Wilson and Cadogan often attended meetings. Van., however, was called only when ministers needed to consult him.

44 Templewood, pp.257, 290; *Vansittart in Office*, p.303.

45 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, pp.86, 212-3.

46 DGFP D-I, N128.

47 The Anglo-Italian Agreement was signed on April 16, 1938, by which Mussolini agreed to withdraw Italian troops from Spain and in return the British Government would "remove such obstacles as might be held to impede the freedom of States members of the League as regards the recognition of Italian sovereignty over Ethiopia." [DBFP 2nd-XIX Nos. 643, 660, 662.] However, in spite of "his solemn engagement", the Duce sent another 4000 volunteers in June and July. Because of this, the Agreement did not come into force. [*Harold Nicolson's Diaries*, p. 347 footnote 3.] Chamberlain, however, failed to learn any lesson from this and trusted the dictators as much as usual.

48 In his Leamington and Bradford speeches on November 20 and December 14, 1939, Eden said, "If our vital interests are situated in certain clearly definable areas, our interest in peace is world-wide." While he declared that Britain must bring her defences up to a standard commensurate with her world-wide interests and responsibility, he emphasised Britain's obligation to France and Belgium. He told his audience that apart from being used in defence of British vital interests, British arms might be used in bringing help to a victim of aggression in any case under the covenant, but "in such a instance there is no automatic obligation to take military action." He appealed for co-operation with the dictator powers, particularly Germany: "So far are we from wishing to encircle Germany that we seek for her co-operation with other nations in the economic and financial as well as in the political sphere. We want neither *blocs* nor barriers in Europe." [*Documents on International Affairs 1936*, pp.260-267.]

49 DBFP 2nd-XVIII, N479 note 1, N566.

50 DBFP 2nd-XIX, Enclosure in N53.

51 DBFP 2nd-XVIII, N479 note 1, N566 & all notes.

52 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N53 notes.

53 ibid, N319 & note 11.

54 DBFP 2nd-XVIII, N510.

55 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N15, Appendix I.

56 DBFP 2nd-XVIII, Nos. 611, 624.

57 ibid, N619.

58 ibid, N623 & note 1.

59 ibid, N639 & notes.

60 Peters, p.275; Calton, D., *Anthony Eden*, London 1981, pp.102-104.

61 In these incidents, the German warships were bombed in the water of Spain.

62 DBFP 2nd-XVIII, Nos. 600, 627, 630, 660; Avon., p.446; Henderson, *Failure of A Mission*, London 1940, pp.67-69.

63 DBFP 2nd-XIX, Appendix I.

64 DBFP 2nd-XVIII, Nos. 628, 636, 638, 641; Peters, pp.277-278.

65 Gannon, *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*, Oxford 1971, p. 71; Peters, p.278.

66 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N115.

67 Henderson, p. 96.

68 Halifax, p.184.
69 Avon., p.509.
70 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N264.
71 ibid, N272 & note 5.
72 ibid, Nos. 298, 306, 307.
73 ibid, N310. Chamberlain intimated "very strongly" to Halifax on October 27 that the latter "ought to manage to see Hitler -- even if it meant going to Berchtergarten [*sic*] -- or whatever the place is". [ibid, N273 note 3]
74 ibid, N319 note 11; *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.60.
75 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N273.
76 ibid, Nos. 349, 395.
77 ibid, Nos. 332, 336, 337, 338. Also see p. 159 above.
78 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.61.
79 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N346.
80 ibid, N349.
81 ibid, N346. In *Facing The Dictators,* Eden described the Halifax-Hitler conversation as a "rather aimless and therefore hazardous discussion", "I wish that Halifax had warned Hitler more strongly against intervention in central Europe."[Avon., p.515]
82 DBFP 2nd-XIX, Nos. 394, 395.
83 Avon., p.516
84 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N349.
85 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, pp. 62-63. Chamberlain wrote to his sister: "I saw Anthony on Friday morning (February 11, 1938 -- Author) and we were in complete agreement, more complete perhaps than we have sometimes been in the past." [*Cadogan's Diaries*, p.47 footnote 2.]
86 DBFP 2nd-XIX, Nos.334, 337, 365, 374, 375, 380
87 ibid, N337 note 3.
88 ibid, N334 note 5.
89 ibid, N301 note 2.
90 ibid, Nos. 325, 394, 395.
91 ibid, N335, 341.
92 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.62.
93 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N354.
94 ibid, N358.
95 ibid, N360.
96 ibid, N401.
97 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.62.
98 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N409.
99 ibid, N465 & note 4, Appendix I.
100 ibid, N439 & note 1, N433.
101 ibid, N465 & note 4.
102 ibid, N468 notes 3, 5; *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.41
103 2nd-XIX, N469.
104 ibid, N477.
105 ibid, N488.
106 ibid, N488 & notes 16, 17.
107 ibid, N512.
108 See note 14 above.
109 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N500.
110 ibid, N500 note 3; *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.45.
111 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N503.
112 Gannon, pp. 143-145.
113 Brook-Shepherd, p.87.
114 H.C. Debs. 5s. Vol. 331, col. 1863, Feb. 16, 1938.
115 *Harold Nicolson's Diaries*, p.323.
116 DGFP D-I, N274.
117 *Harold Nicolson's Diaries*, pp. 314-315.

118 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N343.
119 Adamthwaite, "The British Government and the Media 1937-1938", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 18 (1983), p.284.
120 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, pp.102, 108.
121 H.C. Debs. 5s. Vol. 332, col. 1248, Mar. 2, 1938.
122 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N517.
123 ibid, N523 note 1, N541.
124 *Cadogan's Diaries*, pp. 46-47; *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p. 91.
125 ibid, p.90
126 DBFP 2nd-XIX, N517 note 3.
127 ibid, N517 note 5.
128 ibid, N534.
129 ibid, N522 note 4.
130 ibid, Nos. 554, 557.
131 ibid, N557 note 5, Nos. 580, 592.
132 ibid, N606.
133 ibid, N605
134 ibid, Nos. 609, 610, 611.
135 ibid, N615.
136 See p.161& note 20 above.
137 Feiling, p.341.
138 Cab 23/92 11(38) Mar. 9, 1938.
139 DBFP 3rd-I, Nos. 1, 2, 3.
140 ibid, N4.
141 ibid, N8.
142 ibid, N15.
143 ibid, N13.
144 ibid, Nos. 17, 19, 30, 33.
145 ibid, N44; *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.60.
146 In the course of discussion in the F.O., Cadogan asked Van., "will you fight?" The latter said "No" although he did not want to give up. Cadogan went on to say ironically, "it seems a most cowardly thing to do to urge a small man to fight a big if you won't help the former." [*Cadogan's Diaries*, p.60]
147 ibid, p.60; DBFP 3rd-I, N25.
148 ibid, Nos. 57, 72.
149 ibid, Nos. 20, 27, 43.
150 ibid, N35.
151 Gannon, pp.149-150, 158-159; Nagle, T. W., *A Study of British Public Opinion and the European Appeasement Policy 1933-39*, Librairie Chmielorz 1957, p.121.
152 Thompson, *The Anti-Appeasers*, Oxford 1971, pp.156-157 footnote 3.
153 Cab 23/92 12(38); Cab 23/92 13(38). A minute in the F.O. on the same day showed the official attitude towards the Anschluss, "Alas all is over." [DBFP 2nd-XIX, N587 note 2.]
154 Cab 23/92 12(38) Mar. 12, 1938; Cab 23/92 13(38) Mar. 14, 1938
155 H.C. Debs. 5s. Vol. 333, Col. 55.
156 ibid, cols. 85-86
157 ibid, cols. 93-100
158 ibid, cols. 45-52. On the same day, Corbin told Halifax that the French Government feared that if the Prime Minister's statement on the present crisis "contained no indication of the intentions of His Majesty's Government in the event of such an attack, their silence might be interpreted, not merely in Germany but throughout Europe, as implying that they were disinterested and were prepared to acquiesce in whatever happened. This might have disastrous results..." Although Chamberlain read this message before his speech, he did not alter the wording of that part of the statement concerning Czechoslovakia.[DBFP 3rd-I, N82; FO 371/22337 R2610/162/12.]
159 *Harold Nicolson's Diaries*, p. 331.
160 Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, London 1993, p.133.

161 Churchill, pp.212-213; Taylor, A.J.P., *The Origins of the Second World War*, London 1972, pp.149-150; Eubank, *The Origins of World War II*, Illinois 1969, p.98; Bell, *The Origins of the Second World War In Europe*, London 1986, p.229.

162 Templewood, p.283.

163 Churchill, p.211.

164 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.63.

165 See p. 167 above.

166 DBFP 3rd-I, N97.

Chapter 5 MUNICH

I. OPERATION GREEN AND HITLER'S GAMBLE

The decision to attack Czechoslovakia was taken at the same time as the Anschluss.[1] The plan entitled "Operation Green", was first formulated by Field Marshal Blombert on June 24, 1937.[2] However, after the Anschluss Germany needed some time to digest the fruits of its victory. Goering assured M. Mastny, the Czech Minister in Berlin, on March 11 and 12, that the developments in Austria would "in no way have a detrimental influence on the relations between the German Reich and Czechoslovakia," and emphasised "the continued earnest endeavour on the part of Germany to improve those mutual relations."[3] However, a few weeks later Hitler and General Keitel had a further conversation to discuss Operation Green. They agreed the following:

> Idea of strategic attack out of the blue without cause or possibility of justification is rejected.
>
> Action after a period of diplomatic discussions which gradually lead to a crisis and to war.[4]

In the meantime, the Nazi regime instigated Konrad Henlein,[5] the leader of the Sudeten Nazi Party, to stir up trouble. Owing to the rumour of German intervention, the Czech Government ordered mobilisation on May 21, which made Hitler feel furious. On the 30th, the Fuhrer took his "unalterable decision to smash Czechoslovakia by military action". Operation Green was to be carried out by October 1 at the latest. In his opinion, it would be best, if possible, to avoid the Western Powers' intervention, which he thought most unlikely. However, if intervention was provoked, he would take the risk of war.[6]

His view of risking war with the Western Powers met with strong disagreement among his subordinate officials. Unlike Hitler, they thought that France and Russia would take the Czech side and Britain would not stand by if Germany attacked Czechoslovakia. They had no way to win the war even taking into account Italian and Japanese help.[7] In order to save the country from plunging into a hopeless war, the opposing generals created a plot by which they would first force Hitler to abandon his idea and then remove him from office.[8]

In mid-August, they sent to London their representative Herr von Kleist, who had a series of interviews with Van., Churchill and other important persons in the political circle. His mission was "to obtain material with which to convince the Chancellor of the strong probability of Great Britain intervening should Germany take violent action against Czechoslovakia."[9]

On September 27, since war seemed unavoidable, the opposing officers fixed a date for the execution of their plot: the 29th. General Halder, their leader, confessed after the Second World War (1946) that "we were firmly convinced that we would be successful" if the plot had been carried out. However, when he was to give the order of execution on the 28th, the news arrived that Chamberlain would come for further talks so as to save a peaceful settlement. The General said,

> I therefore took back the order of execution because, owing to this fact, the entire basis for the action had been taken away. ...[10]

II. POLICY-FORMULATING BEFORE MUNICH

1. Czechoslovakia Doomed in March

When the Cabinet summoned the emergency meeting to discuss the Anschluss on March 12, the Prime Minister instructed that with consultation of the French, Halifax should consider what measures could be taken to avert the similar threat that Germany might create in Czechoslovakia.[11]

Policy towards Czechoslovakia began to be formulated in the light of this instruction. Mr. Newton in Prague analysed the situation in his dispatch of March 15,

> [The Czechoslovak Government] still believe they can continue with their present policy so long as they can count on France as an ally, and so long as France in her turn counts on ... British support if she involves herself in hostilities with Germany over Czechoslovakia.

He warned,

> Should war come, nothing that we or France could do would save Czechoslovakia... Should France, nevertheless, think it worth while to try to perpetuate the *status quo* in her own interests, I submit that she should do so with her own strength, and His Majesty's Government are entitled to decline the risk of involving Great Britain in a fresh war...

The Ambassador then suggested

> We should rather make it as easy for her [Czechoslovakia] as possible to adjust her position to the circumstance of post-war Europe while she can still do so in more favourable conditions than will obtain later.

He implied that it was quite impossible to adopt a policy of maintaining Czechoslovak independence without any impairment. This opinion was shared "unreservedly and in all respects" by Henderson.[12] The document was submitted to the FPC for their information, obtaining much attention there.[13] However, not everyone was happy with the Ambassador's telegram. Van. was furious and said that he "cannot accept" Newton's suggestion.[14]

Within the F.O. Sargent, Assistant Under-Secretary, in favour of backing the Franco-Czech alliance,[15] offered his proposals, which were quite similar to that of the "Grand Alliance" by Churchill.[16] Considering the Anschluss benefited Germany very much and worsened the European situation, he suggested that there were two points that the Government should bear in mind: firstly, to "organise and strengthen the diplomatic resources of this country, not only in order to help prevent by these means a catastrophe from occurring, but also to have these resources in readiness for immediate use if a catastrophe does occur". To do so, "We must", he said,

> expect that the French Government will insist, with increasing persistence and vigour, that His Majesty's Government should now declare themselves more definitely than hitherto as to the policy they intend to adopt in the face of the altered balance of power in Europe and as to the measures they propose to take to give effect to it.

In addition, he urged the British Government to open staff talks with France and Belgium immediately. Britain should also strengthen ties with Greece, Turkey, Poland, Russia and so on. Secondly, he asked the Government to "consider whether, for the sake of ultimate peace, His Majesty's Government are prepared now to defend one or other position in Europe if and when it is attacked by Germany." He warned, "if we and the French do nothing, not only is Czechoslovakia likely to be dismembered for the benefit of Germany, but the whole of Central Europe will be lost to us and to France. In any future war not only will they not be allies but they won't even be neutrals."[17]

Another typical point of view was indicated by Gladwyn Jebb, Private Secretary to the Permanent Under-Secretary. In spite of thinking that Sargent's proposal was "logical", he pointed out that

> there is an obvious risk that it may lead to a war for which we are not, as yet, prepared, and in which we might consequently be defeated. ... As evidence of our ability to do so, we shall attempt to organise a "Grand Alliance," and presumably put the economy of this country on to a war footing at once. The trouble is that, once having committed ourselves to this attitude, the Dictators may "get their blow in first."

He laid down his alternative course that was to restore the "Stresa Front" by taking "immediate steps to come to a real understanding with Mussolini", although he knew very well that "Mussolini has now gone too far in his dealings with Hitler to join in an anti-German combination". The essential point in his alternative course was "a tacit understanding that we would *not* support Czechoslovakia."[18]

The third opinion was represented by Strang, Head of Central Department, who was authorised to prepare a memo for the F.O. according to the Cabinet decision of March 12. He reminded the Government of Hitler's words about Czechoslovakia that if "internal explosions took place, Germany would not remain neutral, but would act like lightning." Neither the German Government nor Henlein had stated with any precision what was meant by autonomy. Therefore, it should be assumed that not only was Sudetenland to be autonomous and self-governing but also was to be involved into the incorporation of the German districts in the Reich. He said,

> It has been the policy of His Majesty's Government to advise the Czechoslovak Government to make all possible concessions to the Sudetic Germans,... as a means of depriving the German Government of any reasonable pretext for complaint or intervention.

Then, from the legal point of view, he pointed out that a treaty existed between France and Czechoslovakia. Britain, however, had no obligations to Czechoslovakia except those of the League. Although Britain had obligations to France as a signatory to the Locarno in addition to those of the League,

> If Germany were to attack Czechoslovakia, and France came to the assistance of the latter, ... Germany, for her part, would not, by becoming engaged in hostilities with France in the circumstances postulated, be committing an act of unprovoked aggression against France, and, consequently, Great Britain would be under no obligation under the Locarno Treaty to go to the assistance of France...

In his opinion, a new commitment to Czechoslovakia by Britain, whether undertaken directly or indirectly "might considerably reduce the chances of war, in that it might prove to be an effective deterrent." On the other hand, "it might

increase our chance of being involved in war earlier rather than later, since the possession of an undertaking from us might encourage France to take action in defence of Czechoslovakia". If Britain were prepared to undertake a new commitment, he suggested his preferable alternative,

> (I) Action at Prague to the end that the Czechoslovak Government should satisfy both Great Britain and France that she has done all that she reasonably can to remove the grievances of the Sudetendeutschen....
>
> (II) An undertaking by Great Britain to France, in declaratory form, that if in the event of a German attack on Czechoslovakia, France came the assistance of Czechoslovakia after consulting with and securing the approval of His Majesty's Government, His Majesty's Government would view France's intervention with benevolent sympathy, and if in the ensuing war French territory were threatened or attacked by Germany, either by land, sea or air, then His Majesty's Government would give immediate support to France in defence of her territory.[19]

Having read all these papers, Cadogan commented that "Sargent paints a gloomy picture":

> Germany might be able to establish an *economic* domination of that part of the world. ... I do not see how we can stop her. ... why should we (who have others) try to prevent her?[20]

After nights of thinking, he "toned down Sargent's picture and came out against a guarantee to Cz[echoslovakia]."[21]

As regards Jebb's proposals, the Permanent Under-Secretary said that it was "the best hope that I can see", but he scarcely thought they could do it by the method Jebb had suggested on the grounds that "It is too crude, both for our own people here, and for Italy."

So he finally came to the conclusion that Strang's paper was "the best course" by comparison with the other proposals. However, he could not conceal his hesitation:

> Much will depend on the report of the Chiefs of Staff. Such a course obviously involves an enormous risk: it is calling a halt to Hitler at a moment when he is an exalted mood. It might precipitate the conflict that we all fear. Shall we risk a war now, when our prospects are not too bad, or shall we put it off till our prospects, maybe, will be worse, but with the hope that in the meanwhile "something will turn up"?

But one thing was certain, as he wrote, "unless the Chiefs of Staff can give us a much more reassuring report than I expect, we should undertake no fresh commitment in regard to Czechoslovakia."

Synthesising different views in the F.O., Cadogan made a collection of all these documents together with his own comments. [22]

Halifax also studied these papers.[23] Based on Strang's paper, he submitted his revised memo for the FPC, in which the most important supplement was that he added another alternative, namely, "no new commitment to France". Of this choice, he said,

> [It] is advanced not on its own positive merits, but rather on the strength of the objections to other alternative courses. It is briefly, that we should decline to undertake any fresh commitment in regard to Czechoslovakia; that we should, on the contrary, try to persuade France and Czechoslovakia that the best course would be for the latter to make the best terms she can with Germany... since in that event Germany would have less reason to risk the hazards of war in order to obtain what she could have some hope of obtaining by peaceful negotiation.

Despite the wide acknowledgement that Germany's superiority in arms might be greater a year or two hence than this time, this policy alternative did not consider it "a good argument for risking disaster now."[24]

In these few days, Chamberlain, Halifax and Cadogan discussed a guarantee to Czechoslovakia and some related points on a number of occasions.[25] They considered 1) that the Chiefs of Staff should estimate the military aspect of giving a guarantee to France if she was involved in war with Germany over Czechoslovakia; 2) Churchill's proposal of the Grand Alliance; 3) the F.O. should advise the Cabinet as to whether, on the political aspect, Czechoslovakia should allow an Anglo-French or a purely British Commission of Inquiry to visit that country and report on the Sudeten position. The Prime Minister's observations were "apparently moving on these lines".[26] For a while, both he and Halifax were "rather on the line of Winston's 'Grand Alliance' " as he wrote,

> it is perfectly evident, surely, now that force is the only argument Germany understands, and that collective security cannot offer any prospect of preventing such events, until it can show a visible force of overwhelming strength, backed by determination to use it. And if that is so, is it not obvious that such force and determination are most effectively mobilised by alliances,... I don't want to get back to

> alliances but if Germany continues to behave as she has done lately, she may drive us to it.

However, this was not what he really wanted, because he continued:

> If we can avoid another violent coup in Czechoslovakia, which ought to be feasible, it may be possible for Europe to settle down again, and some day for us to start peace talks again with the Germans.[27]

With some influence from Cadogan, Chamberlain finally abandoned the idea of a Grand Alliance as well as backing up France in connection with her obligations to Czechoslovakia on the grounds that

> nothing that France or we could do could possibly save Czechoslovakia from being overrun by the Germans,... The Austrian frontier is practically open; the great Skoda munition works are within easy bombing distance of the German aerodromes, the railways all pass through German territory, Russia is 100 miles away. Therefore we could not help Czechoslovakia -- she would simply be a pretext for going to war with Germany.

Halifax independently came to the same conclusion. He also thought that the Grand Alliance "would be a long and complicated matter." It "would afford both a provocation and an opportunity to Germany to dispose of Czechoslovakia before the grand alliance had been organised."[28]

At the FPC meeting of March 15, Chamberlain reaffirmed the policy of getting on terms with the dictators by saying that "he did not think anything that had happened should cause the government to alter their present policy; on the contrary, recent events had confirmed him in his opinion that the policy was the right one and he only regretted that it had not been adopted earlier."[29]

Three days later, the FPC held a meeting again, which finally decided the Czechs' doom. Halifax submitted his memo as a basis for discussion and for the statement that the Prime Minister would make in the House in a few days.

The question raised was whether Hitler wanted only the Sudeten or the whole of Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain obviously agreed with Newton's assumption that

> the seizure of the whole Czechoslovakia would not be in accordance with Herr Hitler's policy, which was to included all Germans in the Reich but not to include other nationalities. It seemed most likely... that Germany would absorb the Sudeten German territory and reduce the rest of Czechoslovakia to a condition of dependent neutrality.

He went on to suggest that "we should ask the German Government to give us an assurance that pending the investigation and report by the Commission of Enquiry, the German Government would not resort to force against Czechoslovakia."

Then the Cabinet started to discuss Halifax' memo paragraph by paragraph, and were more and more inclined towards the alternative course of "no new commitment". Only Oliver Stanley, President of the Board of Trade, wanted to propose a simple declaration that Britain would come to France's aid if she was involved in war with Germany due to Czechoslovakia, but his proposal met with strong disagreement from others. Inskip, Minister of Co-ordination Defence said straightway that "he could see no reason why we should take any steps to maintain such ... a highly artificial state." Simon also thought, if war against Germany "was successful, when it was over what should the victors do? ... Czechoslovakia was a modern and very artificial creation with no real roots in the past." Other Ministers such as Ormsby-Gore (Secretary for the Colonies) and Malcolm MacDonald (Dominion Secretary) spoke openly against any new commitment.

When he made a comment on the memo, Chamberlain said that he was disturbed by the course of new commitment too because, not only might it strengthen the French argument that "whatever might be the position under the Locarno Treaty, we in fact could not afford to see France destroyed, and we must therefore always come to her aid"; but it also "might cause Germany to fear that France would be more ready and willing to implement her treaty undertaking to Czechoslovakia." Therefore, rather than backing up France, he suggested that the British Government should require the French to give them "whole-hearted support in any attempt to find a peaceful solution to avoid any risk of an outbreak of war." He wondered "whether it would not be possible to make some arrangement which would prove more acceptable to Germany. ... this would have the advantage that it would be more likely to secure permanency." He tended to believe Hitler's words that Germany only wanted some measure of local autonomy for the Sudeten territory. If this could be done, Germany would be prepared to guarantee the independence of Czechoslovakia. Therefore, he thought that "at all events the possibility of some arrangement of this kind might be worth exploring."

Following him, The Foreign Secretary analysed that, firstly, the theory of a fresh commitment "rested on the assumption that when Germany secured hegemony over Central Europe she would then pick a quarrel with France and ourselves." But he "did not agree with this argument." Secondly, the more the Western Powers were plotting to encircle Germany, the more difficult it would be to make any real settlement with Germany. If the Government had decided on a policy of no further commitments, he suggested,

> We still ... retained full liberty of action, and we could in any particular case say whether or not we would or would not come to France's assistance. This had the great advantage that we were able to keep both France and Germany guessing.

Towards the end of the meeting, although they still requested Chiefs of Staff to submit their report for further consideration, the FPC had in fact come to the conclusion, as Halifax said, that

> we must decline to undertake any fresh commitment in regard to Czechoslovakia and that we must try and persuade Dr. Benes and also the French Government that the best course would be for Czechoslovakia to make the best terms she could with Germany.[30]

At a full Cabinet meeting of March 22, the report of the Chiefs of Staff was ready to be circulated to the Ministers. Strictly guided by the no-new-commitment idea of the Prime Minister, the military advisers based their report on two hypothetical alternatives: 1) Britain would cooperate with France, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Romania, Hungary, Turkey and Greece or any of them to resist German invasion of Czechoslovakia; 2) Britain would make a guarantee to France were the latter compelled to aid Czechoslovakia by her obligations. The Chiefs of Staff could not foresee "our defence forces will be strong enough to safeguard our territory, trade and vital interests against Germany, Italy and Japan simultaneously" at the time when it happened, but they were certain that Britain was not ready for war in 1938. Many of the possible allies above, in their opinion, were of doubtful military value in such a war. Therefore, they concluded

> that no pressure that we and our possible allies can bring to bear, either by sea, on land or in the air, could prevent Germany from invading and overrunning Bohemia and from inflicting a decisive defeat on the Czecho-Slovakian Army. We should then be faced with the necessity of undertaking a war against Germany for the purpose of restoring

> Czecho-Slovakia's lost integrity and this object would only be achieved by the defeat of Germany and as the outcome of a prolonged struggle.[31]

Halifax thought the Report "an extremely melancholy document," but "no Government could afford to overlook it." He told the Cabinet the proposed line, which was said to be based on this Report, but in fact had been decided by the FPC a few days before. He said that he was not in a position

> to recommend a policy involving a risk of war. Consequently, he had to consider the alternatives. His suggestion was that we should endeavour to induce the Government of Czecho-Slovakia to apply themselves to producing a direct settlement with the Sudeten-Deutsch. We should also persuade the French to use their influence to obtain such a settlement. ... it might be possible for the British and French Governments to approach the German Government with a view to acceptance of the settlement in Czecho-Slovakia.

However upset the French Government might be with the above course, the Foreign Secretary said that he did not see what alternative was open to them other than to acquiesce. Moreover, he supplemented, "we could not accept new commitments withdrawing the decision on peace and war from our Government and leaving it in the hands of the French Government."

The Prime Minister explained that "they had approached the question with a bias in favour of some kind of guarantee to Czecho-Slovakia," but the FPC had changed their views because the Foreign Secretary's proposal had been accepted "more generally and increasingly".

The Cabinet minutes showed that the Ministers thought that "even if we had the strength, we could not protect a country in the geographical position of Czecho-Slovakia."[32]

At the end of meeting, the Cabinet generally agreed to the policy proposed by the Foreign Secretary and supported by the Prime Minister. They instructed Halifax, with the help of Chamberlain, Simon, Hoare and Stanley, to draft the statement on the above lines for the Prime Minister, who would speak in the House on March 24. In addition, Halifax should inform the French Government of the policy that the British Government had decided.[33]

On the 24th, full debates in the House on the Czechoslovak problem took place. Chamberlain again tried to confuse the public. He first reminded the House that

Britain was bound by the Covenant and the Locarno Treaty towards France, and the Covenant towards Czechoslovakia, which "might lead to the use of our arms for purpose other than our own defence." The Government would "stand by these declarations." Then he said that he could not go further and give an assurance to France in the event of her being involved in war with Germany over Czechoslovakia, nor could he agree a guarantee to the independence and integrity of Czechoslovakia because this automatic pledge might take the right of decision on peace or war away from the British Government's hand. His policy therefore was to ask the Czech Government "to meet the reasonable wishes of the German minority."[34]

This speech was very unsatisfactory to the Opposition critics. Attlee, Archibald Sinclair (the Liberal Leader) and Churchill voiced sharp criticism. Attlee pointed out that Chamberlain "yields to force all the time." The Prime Minister was proceeding on "a policy of negotiation with persons who have shown their belief in force and who exercise force even while he is negotiating with them." The proposal which the Labour Leader put forward was that the Government should organise collective security in the League and "be prepared to deal with the utmost generosity with other countries", including Russia, to prevent war. Churchill, while urging the Government to take up his proposal of a "Grand Alliance", pin-pricked the ambivalence in Chamberlain's statement about guarantees to France and Czechoslovakia by saying:

> with the rape of Austria before our eyes, Great Britain should have said, and should still say, "If the German march in upon this State of Czechoslovakia without even waiting for an impartial examination, perhaps by a commission of the League of Nations, or some other body into the position of the Sudeten Deutch and the remedies offered for their grievances ... then we should feel, on this occasion, and in this emergency, bound to act with France in resisting it.[35]

However, all these arguments could not move the policy-makers an inch. In defence of the Government policy, Simon indicated that the Prime Minister's reaffirmation of the existing commitments was clear enough and good enough to deal with the present problem. He rejected the idea of a Grand Alliance by saying that it was "contrary to" the conception of the League and would lead to "disaster".[36] Halifax later explained that it should not "give too broad an interpretation" to Chamberlain's statement of using British arms to defend the victims of aggression because it was "in the nature of a probability" but not "in the nature of a certainty."[37]

2. Anglo-French Communication in April

Shortly after the Anschluss, the French Ambassador told Halifax that France would take immediate action in the event of any aggression being perpetrated on Czechoslovakia.[38] In addition, on March 17 information from the Soviet side showed that Russia also declared that they would intervene in defence of Czechoslovakia if France did.[39] Chamberlain disliked the Soviet declaration because he thought that Russia "stealthily and cunningly" pulled "all the strings behind the scenes to get us involved in war with Germany." So he immediately turned down the Soviet proposal by telling the House that the Russian intention would spoil the establishment of European peace.[40]

As for the French enquiry, Strang drafted the answer based on the line of "no new commitment". Sargent then made some amendments so as "to remove all possible ambiguity". After being submitted to Cadogan and Halifax, these papers were sent to Paris on March 22 and 23. While vetoing the French suggestion that both Governments should utter a joint warning to Germany, they informed them of the no-new-commitment decision made by the British Government, which required that Britain and France impose joint pressure on Czechoslovakia to obtain a peaceful settlement with Germany. This disappointed the French very much.[41] They looked forward to exchanging views with their British partners.[42]

On April 27, the Ministers discussed the policy for the impending meeting with the French. Chamberlain told his colleagues that although the War Office thought the staff talks would "come as a severe shock" when it became clear how very limited an amount of military assistance -- two divisions -- Britain could send to France at the outset of war, he thought it would be difficult to refuse if the French wanted to hold such conversations. Otherwise, that would seem "rather churlish". In the course of discussion, Simon said, "the risk of coming so near to the point of a commitment to send two divisions was that it would be assumed by the French as a definite understanding". Halifax pointed out that they should let the French know frankly that they could not commit themselves by sending troops to France. "But it was also important not to say that in no circumstance would Britain ever send any troops."

The Prime Minister then concluded that if in no circumstance would they allow any staff talks, "there might be an uncomfortable jar" in Anglo-French relations. The Cabinet agreed that the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary should have discretion to decide whether the Army staff talks took place separate from the current Air staff conversations.[43]

At the invitation of the British Government, the Daladier-Bonnet team[44] came to London on the 28th and spent two days in talks with their British partners. Both sides soon found they were at odds.

Halifax, on behalf of the British Government, told the French at the beginning that it was not necessary to hold naval staff talks. As to the Air Staff talks, however, he said that they could be held within a certain scope. Then he explained that the greatest help which the French could hope for from Britain at the beginning of war, would be two divisions.

On the French side, Daladier tried to persuade the British leaders to open the naval staff talks but in vain. He, however, felt quite satisfied with the British approval of the Air staff talks and the decision of sending two divisions to France. But his satisfaction was certainly set back by Chamberlain's words:

> His Majesty's Government found it difficult to commit themselves at this stage to sending even such a comparatively small force to the Continent in certain eventualities. He could only say that the Government of the day might decide to do so, or they might not.

On the second day, talk concentrated on Czechoslovakia. Halifax, at the very beginning, pointed out that Britain was different from France in the position that the latter was bound by very precise engagements towards Czechoslovakia, but the former was not. The British Government felt

> that every step that was possible must be taken to avoid an outbreak which, as things now stood, might carry with it a very considerable risk for both France and Great Britain.

Therefore, he thought that the pressure should be put on Benes to make a supreme effort to reach a settlement with Germany.

Although he agreed that the Czechoslovak Government should go further to meet the demands of the Sudeten Germans, Daladier warned that Henlein "was not, in fact, seeking any concessions, and his real object was the destruction of the present

Czechoslovak State." He implied the criticism that when Hitler took the Rhineland and Austria, Britain talked a great deal, "but nothing had been done". Now "we were faced with the question of Czechoslovakia." He believed that "war could only be avoided if Great Britain and France made their determination quite clear to maintain the peace of Europe by respecting the liberties and the rights of independent people". He disagreed with the British view of military weakness, he estimated that the Czechoslovak army numbered 180,000 men on a peace footing, and on mobilisation it could enlarged to 500,000, well trained, well equipped, and animated by public spirit. If Britain and France took action, he believed Roumania, Yugoslavia and perhaps even Poland, would change their views and take the Czechoslovak side. Furthermore, Russia still possessed the strongest air force (5,000 aeroplanes) in Europe, her potential war resources were extremely great and could easily be brought into play. Therefore he suggested that when they asked Czechoslovakia to make reasonable concessions, if the two Powers should declare at the same time that "they could not permit the destruction of the Czechoslovak State, then the peace of Europe might be saved." Bonnet supplemented,

> if France remained alone, the situation must be uncertain; but if solidarity existed between France and Great Britain they could ensure the success of their views. ... if ... there were no solidarity between the French and British Governments in support of Czechoslovakia, then he was convinced that Germany would be in a position to remove Czechoslovakia from the map ...

After hearing the French arguments, Chamberlain said that the French proposal was a "bluff" because Czechoslovakia was surrounded by German territory on three sides. He warned that the French "sentimental considerations" were dangerous. He doubted "whether the picture was really so black as M. Daladier had painted it", and "whether Herr Hitler really desired to destroy the Czechoslovak State or rather a Czechoslovak State." In conclusion, he told his French friends that

> He had himself seen war and had seen how impossible it was for anyone engaging in any war like the last war to come out of it stronger or happier. Therefore only dire necessity would ever persuade him to wage a preventive war. He was against preventive war.

However, in spite of the British argument, the French still insisted that pressing Czechoslovakia to make further concessions would cause the result that "after such

concessions had been offered the road would be open to Germany, who would be given a free hand to act as she wished, then we should only have precipitated a catastrophe instead of preventing it."

With the adjournment of the meeting at noon, no agreement had been reached between the two sides.[45]

During lunch time, Cadogan took the chance to have a talk with Chamberlain and Halifax. He regarded the French proposal as "awful rubbish", and offered his suggestion, "of asking Germans what it is they *want*", to persuade the French.[46] In the afternoon meeting, Halifax took this line in conversation, which was effective. Finally, both sides reached agreement as follows:

> both Governments were agreed that there should be a demarche by His Majesty's Government alone in Berlin. They would explain to the German Government that they were doing their best to find a peaceful solution of the Sudeten difficulty and had asked Dr. Benes to make his contributions, but it took two to reach an agreement, and they therefore wished to know what was the position of the German Government. They wished to impress on the German Government that, in the meantime, and in view of their intervention at Prague, there was no need, nor indeed any reason, for action on the part of the German Government. Simultaneously, a *demarche* would be made at Prague by both the French and the British Governments to secure the maximum concessions from Dr. Benes.[47]

3. The Runciman Mission

Four days after the Anglo-French talks, Halifax instructed Henderson to inform the German Government of the *demarche* made by Britain and France. He appealed the Germans to "use their influence with Henlein in the direction of moderation", while the British Government put their pressure on Prague.[48] At the same time, he authorised Newton both to inform the Czechs of the Anglo-French *demarche*, and to press them to "make a supreme effort" to meet Henlein's demands.[49] On the other hand, in an instruction to the British Ambassador in Paris on May 22, Halifax warned the French Government that they "should not be under any illusion as to attitude" of Britain. If France was "the victim of unprovoked aggression by German," Britain would come to her assistance. "If, however, the French Government were to assume that His Majesty's Government would at once take joint action with them to preserve Czechoslovakia against German aggression, it is only fair to warn them that our

Runciman would not be "an arbitrator", as Chamberlain declared on July 26, "but investigator and mediator."[59] From early August to early September, Runciman worked very hard to keep the two parties together, particularly to press Benes go further and further to meet the SdP's demands. Under this pressure, the Czech Government offered the "Third Plan"[60] in late August to satisfy the SdP's points for equality and autonomy, but the SdP rejected it.[61] At the end of that month, Benes put forward the "Fourth Plan" based on the "Third", on which Runciman commented that "This plan embodied almost all of the requirements" of the SdP's demands.[62] However, when both parties discussed the Plan on September 7, the SdP representatives used the incident at Moravska Ostrava to break off the negotiations for good.[63]

In this period, the press, under the influence of the Government, remained quite optimistic. It generally welcomed the announcement of the Runciman mission on one hand, while being concerned about the likelihood of failure in mediation on the other. The *Daily Telegraph* appealed for compromise from both sides. The *Manchester Guardian* proposed that Runciman should stand by the Czechs while he looked for justice. *The Times*, however, revealed a tendency to suggest that the Czech problem stood in the way of Anglo-German understanding. The F.O. kept the muzzle on the media to avoid its alarming the public. On September 5, they informed the BBC that no commentary should be given on the international crisis. Although they denied this was "an instruction", they insisted that it was a "very strong" recommendation. Under this pressure, Harold Nicolson's script, which discussed the Czechoslovak crisis, had to be re-written twice, and finally its subject became something dealing with the rise in milk prices to seven pence a quart.[64] On the very day when the negotiations broke off, a leading article of *The Times* contained the following passage:

> It might be worth while for the Czechoslovak Government to consider whether they should exclude altogether the project, which has found favor in some quarters, of making Czechoslovakia a more homogeneous State by the secession of the fringe of alien populations who are contiguous to the nation with which they are united by race.

The phrase "project, which has found favor in some quarters" could be suspected of referring either to the Cabinet or the F.O. Although the Foreign Secretary

statements do not warrant any such assumption." Because of this fatal discouragement, the French abandoned the idea to fulfil their obligations to Czechoslovakia.[50]

However, the negotiations between the Czech Government and Henlein were not promising in the forthcoming months. In mid-July, Halifax obtained the information that "Henlein took an extremely pessimistic view of the situation", and he no longer trusted the Czechoslovak Government. Halifax foresaw if the deadlock was not broken, Henlein would ask for a plebiscite.[51]

In this period, the F.O. had been considering sending a conciliator to bridge the gap between the two parties. Halifax thought on May 8 that it was worth keeping in mind, but the move was "premature".[52] Nevertheless, he worried that negotiations might break down. He instructed Phipps to consult the French Government over the idea that the two Governments would send "an international commission" to investigate the cause of deadlock and "bring the two parties together again."[53] On June 21, Newton suggested appointing "an outstanding figure" as a mediator.[54] This suggestion met with great attention in the F.O. Mallet, First Secretary, agreed with Newton and pointed out that "it would be better not to sound the Czechoslovak Government at present" on the grounds that it would make the Czechs less ready to reach agreement, because they would feel able to get better terms through the British mediation than they would in direct negotiation with the Nazis, and that it would also give the Sudetens the impression that Britain expected negotiations to fail and therefore discouraged them from seeking to make them succeed. He went on to say, "in any 'compromise' that we are to find we shall have to induce the Czechs to make further concessions" on all or some of the Sudetens' demands. If Britain were to intervene with an offer of mediation in order to forestall a plebiscite,

> we must (1) be ready not only to mediate on internal affairs, but also to put forward a scheme for changing the international status of Czechoslovakia; and (2) to have our mediator ready.[55]

His proposal was generally agreed by Van. and Sargent. Halifax and Cadogan initialled the document.[56] On June 16, the FPC discussed the names of candidates, but no decision was taken[57] until one month later when Halifax "sounded Lord Runciman as to his willingness".[58]

immediately denied that *The Times* represented Government policy, Kordt, the German Charge d' Affairs in London, estimated that this article possibly derived "from a suggestion which reached *The Times* editorial staff from the Prime Minister's entourage." A solid support to this view was the fact that Halifax told Corbin, the French Ambassador, two days later that "from a purely tactical point of view, he was of the same opinion" as the leading article.[65]

The opposition was agitated by the Government's ambiguous attitude towards the Czechoslovak problem. On the 8th, National Labour Executives held a joint meeting, issuing "The Blackpool Declaration", which was approved by the Trade Union Congress the same day. It says:

> If mediation is not now successful, a relentless and inevitable chain of events will drag the whole world into war. France and the Soviet Union are bound by Treaty to support Czechoslovakia if it is attacked. They have announced that they will at once honour their engagements, ... The British Government must leave no doubt in the mind of the German Government that they will unite with the French and Soviet Governments to resist an attack on Czechoslovakia.

Their slogan was "Stand by the Czechs!".

As Parliament was not in session, Attlee requested that the House be summoned for debate, but twice met with Chamberlain's refusal. Hugh Dalton, Labour Executive, commented, "Had such a discussion taken place a fortnight earlier, the Munich surrender could not have been made."[66]

However, Churchill and Eden were luckier than their Labour friends. These two Conservative bank-benchers took advantage of their prestige in approaching Ministers and delivered their advice. Churchill wrote several letters to Halifax, in which he suggested that Britain, France and Russia should send a joint note to Germany, warning that the use of force would raise a "capital issue" for the three Powers. He believed that America "would give moral support to such a declaration." In addition, partial Fleet mobilisation was necessary.[67] Eden went to the F.O. on September 9 to bring Halifax the similar suggestion in more moderate language. The Foreign Secretary comforted his predecessor by saying "Great minds are thinking alike, for my mind is moving on just such a project and indeed I was going to speak to Neville about a draft today."[68] The Prime Minister, consulting with the Opposition leaders and with Churchill and Eden, declared on the 11th that "Germany cannot with

impunity carry out a rapid and successful military campaign against Czechoslovakia without fear of intervention by France and by Great Britain."[69] However, this warning was soon proved to be a sham due to the fact that before this declaration Chamberlain had decided to go to see Hitler in person so as to buy peace at any price.

III. POLICY-MAKING DURING MUNICH PERIOD

1. Plan Z

As the Runciman mission was likely to fail, the Government were still in the dark about Hitler's real intentions. There were two different views mentioned at Cabinet meetings. The first view, with a great deal of evidence to support it, was that Hitler was determined to intervene by force. The second one was that while Hitler was determined to get the Sudeten German question settled this year, he had not yet made up his mind to use force for this purpose. Halifax felt "the conflict of evidence was such that it was impossible to say which view was correct."[70] However, he was soon inclined to believe the first view. In that case he said, "nothing which we could do would stop him."

The Foreign Secretary met Churchill on September 11. The latter expressed his proposition as follows,

> we should tell Germany that if she set foot in Czechoslovakia, we should at once be at war with her. ... he thought that by taking it we should incur no added risk.

But Halifax commented that this opinion was "at the best a very doubtful view."[71] He suggested,

> He was not prepared to say that we would go to war on the issue of Czechoslovakia alone, since it was impossible to say in what form that issue might arise. To say without qualification that we were prepared to go to war to defend Czechoslovakia would, in fact, put the decision of peace or war in the hands of others than ourselves.[72]

Chamberlain fully supported his suggestion although he realised that "if we were right up against war, public opinion might well change suddenly". In addition, he thought that although an ultimatum "might avert war, it was not certain that it would do so." If Hitler regarded it as a "bluff", Britain had to choose between being shown up as bluffing and going to war. Moreover,

> supposing the threat was made and had the desired results on this occasion; would that be the end of the story? The steps taken on the 21st May had not proved the end of the story, and people were now saying that it had produced in Herr Hitler a feeling of being thwarted.

Therefore, he reached the same conclusion as Halifax, "we should not utter a threat to Herr Hitler, that if he went into Czechoslovakia we should declare war upon him."[73]

But the problem was still there. During this period, Chamberlain kept racking his brain "to try and devise some means of averting a catastrophe".[74] Towards the end of August, he had a new idea that he would go to see Hitler himself so as to save peace. He first discussed the idea with only Wilson, Henderson (he was back for consultation of the policy).[75] The crucial point was that if Hitler had decided to invade Czechoslovakia, "this new idea might cause him to cancel that intention." Henderson agreed, "it might save the situation at the 11th hour." Chamberlain then consulted Halifax, Simon and Hoare in the following days. It "rather took Halifax's breath away." However, all of them agreed to the proposal, which was now called "Plan Z".[76]

Chamberlain thought that this plan might be put into effect about the 17th[77] on the grounds that

> If adopted too soon it would be asked why this action had been taken before Lord Runciman had finished his task. On the other hand, if we waited too long, Herr Hitler might have taken some irrevocable action.

However, the Plan was brought forward due to the two factors on the 13th. The first was the information from Paris: Daladier said that at all costs Germany must be prevented from invading Czechoslovakia because in that case France would be faced with her obligations. The second was that the SdP delivered the ultimatum to the Czech Government. Faced with this situation, Chamberlain, with support of his closest colleagues, decided to put the Plan into operation at once.[78] He drafted a message that indicated the Prime Minister was ready to visit Hitler and asked the Germans to reply as soon as possible. When it had been put into a simple form, Halifax sent it to Henderson late on the night of the 13th.[79]

After all this had been done, Chamberlain informed the Cabinet of his surprise on the 14th. He explained why he had kept them unaware of the Plan

until then by saying that due to the fear of it leaking out, he had thought it better to delay mentioning it "until the last moment". He hoped that

> the Cabinet would feel that he had not gone beyond his proper duty in taking this action on the advice of those of the colleagues..., but without consulting the full Cabinet.

He outlined the original scheme that, since Hitler liked to see Head of State, "it might be agreeable to his vanity that the British Prime Minister should take so unprecedented a step." This procedure could prevent the Fuhrer from finding an excuse for declining. In addition, Chamberlain felt that he had the advantage of saying more to Hitler face to face than he could put in a letter.

Then he went on to describe the Plan in detail. He would appeal to Hitler, saying that the latter "had a great chance of obtaining fame for himself by making peace in Europe and thereafter by establishing good relations with this country." This could be achieved by finding "a just and equitable settlement." If Hitler showed no confidence that Benes would carry out his promises, the Prime Minister would suggest that "some international body should be set up to supervise the fulfillment of any agreement reached." If Hitler retorted that no agreement had yet been reached, Chamberlain would propose as a solution that the two parties should agree to put their views before Lord Runciman and to accept Runciman as the final arbitrator. Hitler might say that nothing could now settle the matter except a "Plebiscite". On this issue, Chamberlain would take up Simon's suggestion as the answer:

> the Sudeten Germans should at the outset be given a wide measure of autonomy in specified areas, with the option of a Plebiscite after a given period.[80] This ... would relate the Plebiscite to specified areas. As regards mixed areas, the only satisfactory solution seemed to be transfer.

For the rest of Czechoslovakia, Britain should join in guaranteeing its integrity together with France, Russia and Germany.

The Prime Minister thought that the proposed negotiations offered the chance of "securing better relations between Germany and England." This chance would be lost if Hitler "had recourse to force now." He believed what Goering had told Henderson, namely, that after solving the problem of Czechoslovakia, Germany "would finally become a territorially satisfied country."[81]

In the course of discussion, there were no contradictory arguments brought forward. Ministers discussed the Plan along the lines that the Prime Minister had drawn. However Morrison, the Minister of Agriculture, said that

> public opinion had greatly changed in the last few years, and the people who had then been loudest in opposing rearmament were now loudest in demanding that his country should take a firm line.

Halifax emphasised the guidance for the media, and pointed out

> that it was of the utmost importance that steps should be taken to ensure that the Press received the news of plan "Z" correctly, and suggested that it might be necessary that the newspaper proprietors and editors should be seen instead of the Lobby and Diplomatic Correspondents.

Duff Cooper, the Admiralty, pointed out that he was quite confident that if they went to war they should win. What was really influencing them was "hatred of war" rather than "fear of German arms."

Simon thought

> we must be careful that it did not lead us further along the road to complete surrender. It was important to make it plain that the decision taken was not only conciliatory but was also a firm step.

In the end, the Cabinet showed "their whole-hearted approval" of the Plan made by Chamberlain.[82] On the same day, Ribbentrop informed Henderson that "the Fuhrer would naturally be pleased to receive Chamberlain" on the next day, but at Berchtesgaden instead of Berlin.[83]

Based on Halifax's suggestion of guiding the press at the Cabinet meeting, Hoare took action immediately. He organised daily meetings to have interviews with the editor of the *Daily Herald* and chairman of the *News Chronicle*, and persuaded them to hold their papers "on the side of peace". Because of his effective work, the Press generally held a positive attitude towards Chamberlain's visit to Germany. *The Times* admired this "bold move." The *Daily Herald* commented that it was "not only the bold but the supremely wise course." However, the *News Chronicle* approved it on the grounds that it was the best way for the Prime Minister to tell Hitler in person that Britain would cooperate with France and Russia in order to prevent German demands exceeding reasonable scope.[84] Duff Cooper commented that the press reaction

towards Chamberlain's visit was "mainly favourable, including rather surprisingly that of the *Daily Herald*."[85]

Before he left, Chamberlain had a very brief meeting with Attlee, telling the latter "there was a chance of doing something." The Labour Leader said that nobody was against the Prime Minister's attempt to save peace, but "we mustn't give way to threats, we had a duty to the Czechs, and principles which all parties in Britain now adhered to must not be compromised." The Prime Minister "had very little to say; nothing really."[86]

2. Berchtesgaden

Having never been in an aeroplane before, poor old Chamberlain, like a pilgrim, went on a bumpy journey to see Hitler first by plane and then by train. At the beginning of the meeting, he opened the talk along the proposed lines. When they came to the problem of Sudetenland, Chamberlain asked "whether this was all that Germany was demanding, or whether she was not aiming over and above this at the dismemberment of the Czechoslovak State." Hitler replied that the demands of the Sudeten Germans alone were what he was interested in, and the Czechoslovak question would be "the last major problem" to be solved. However, he exclaimed, "I shall not put up with this any longer. I shall settle this question in one way or another." To achieve this end, he "would face any war, and even the risk of a world war." Hearing this, Chamberlain became "indignant" and said with serious calm, "If ...you are determined to proceed against Czecho-Slovakia in any case, ... why did you let me come to Berchtesgaden?" "It is best for me return at once. Anything else now seems pointless." It was obvious that Hitler did not want to break off the conversation, he quietened down immediately, but requested that the British Prime Minister "must first of all state whether he could accept this basis or not, namely, the secession of the Sudeten German region by virtue of the right of self-determination." If so, conversation could continue. Chamberlain said that although he "personally" recognised the principle of the detachment of the Sudeten areas, he "could give no assurance" without consultation of his Cabinet. He suggested they break off the conversation at this point and he would come back to meet the Fuhrer again after consultation. The words "breaking off" made Hitler very uneasy, "but when he understood that Chamberlain would meet him again, he agreed with obvious relief."

At the end, both sides agreed that "in a few days a new conversation will take place."[87]

After the interview, Chamberlain believed that

> I had established a certain confidence, which was my aim, and on my side, ... I got the impression that here was a man who could be relied upon when he had given his word.[88]

The Prime Minister landed at Heston in the late afternoon of the l6th. Immediately he summoned the Ministers to a meeting, Halifax, Simon, Hoare, Cadogan, Wilson, Van. and Runciman being present. He told them that Hitler wanted self-determination, and he thought it would be wrong to go to war to prevent it. However, the meeting broke up without a definite decision being taken.[89] Next day, the Cabinet met in full. Chamberlain first gave an account of his conversation with the Fuhrer. When he came to the principle of self-determination, he said that he did not think that was a matter of whether it was accepted or not, rather "now the principle had been agreed, it remained to examine how it should be carried out." If they wanted to reach a settlement with Germany, they could only make progress along these lines. He hoped "his colleagues were prepared to express their general agreement with the proposition that we should accept the principle of self-determination."

In the course of the discussion, Halifax, Simon and most other Ministers completely supported the Prime Minister. However, Oliver Stanley felt that it was a little difficult to reach a decision on such a vital issue. Duff Cooper worried that if this principle were accepted, "we might be led into a complete surrender." He implied a criticism that the Prime Minister should have put forward to Hitler "a number of reasonable propositions" such as Simon's plan for autonomy for a period, to be followed by a plebiscite. He believed that Hitler "was not prepared to leave any independence to Czechoslovakia." He went on to point out,

> it was a primary interest of this country to prevent any single power dominating Europe. We are now faced with the most formidable power for a century. ... He found it difficult to believe that the self-determination of the Sudeten Germans was Hitler's last aim. ... even if a solution of the present problem was found, it would not be the end of our troubles, and that there was no chance of peace in Europe so long as there was a Nazi regime in Germany.

He drew attention to the fact that Britain "was singularly united", and that the Dominions supported the democratic countries in "a fight against dictators" more than in 1914. However, he finally came over to Chamberlain's side and agreed that the forthcoming negotiation could be based on the principle of self-determination.

Lord De La Warr, Lord Privy Seal, also had some different views. His main point was that if they accepted Hitler's terms without obtaining "*a quid pro quo*", that would represent an abject surrender. He suggested that "we should accept the position laid down by the Prime Minister, that we should try to negotiate the best terms obtainable", for example, demobilisation of the German Army.

After listening to all these arguments, Chamberlain explained and justified himself by saying,

> in certain circumstances we should have to fight, even if our armaments were weaker than they were. But in modern circumstances war was very different from what it was in 1914. To-day war affected the whole population. ... The alternatives to-day were not between abject surrender and war. Acceptance of the principle of self-determination was not an abject surrender.

Nor did he think that it was a good idea to use the acceptance of self-determination as bargain counter to ask Hitler to demobilise his army, on the grounds that "the only result would be that Herr Hitler would order his troops to march straight into Czechoslovakia."

After further discussion, the Cabinet generally agreed with the views expressed by the Prime Minister. However, it was decided that the final conclusion be postponed until after conversation with the French Government.[90]

On the same day, Chamberlain repeated the account of his visit to three Labour Council Executives Citrine, Morrison and Dalton. The Opposition frankly pointed out that "British prestige had been gravely lowered by Chamberlain going to see Hitler." They insisted on standing by their Blackpool Declaration. Towards end of meeting, Dalton addressed the Prime Minister on behalf of Labour Party:

> I don't believe that this will be the last of Hitler's demands. I believe that he intends to go on and on, until he dominates first all Central and South-eastern Europe, then all Europe, and then all the world. And at every future stage this situation may be repeated. When the next crisis comes, you or your successor will once again fly over to see him. You will return and say that the situation is "desperately critical" -- and it will be true. You will say that the German military machine is very

> formidable -- and that will be still more true then than now. You will say that there is no time to lose, that the French, or whoever it may be, are weak and irresolute, and that therefore we must give in. For some time you will give in at the expense of other people, but sooner or later you will have to give in at the expense of British interests, and the end of the whole process may well be the liquidation both of the British Empire and of our British liberties. And at each stage you will have fewer friends and weaker allies to join you in any stand you may, at some late hour, decide to make.

He said to the Prime Minister, "These opinions are not held only in the Labour Party. They are shared by a large number of your own supporters in Parliament." Listening to his words, Chamberlain shuffled a little on his seat and said, "I freely admit that we are often haunted by fears like these, but we do not believe that such a course of things is inevitable. If we can avert war now, we are not certain that it will come later."[91]

On September 18, the Inner Cabinet members and their important advisers had three meetings at 10 Downing Street with the French statesmen. Although the French at the beginning worried about the loss of Czechoslovakia as a military ally in the East if the principle of self-determination were to be accepted, Chamberlain and Halifax succeeded in getting them back to the position that pressure should be put on Benes so as to save the peace. As the result of the conversations both sides agreed on a joint message to the Czech Government on the 19th, informing them that

> both Governments have been compelled to the conclusion that the maintenance of peace and the safety of Czechoslovakia's vital interests cannot effectively be assured unless these areas (Sudetenland--Author) are now transferred to the Reich.[92]

Naturally, this memo was rejected by the Czechs.[93] On receiving the Czech rejection, Newton warned Krofta, the Czech Foreign Minister, that "refusal or evasion at this moment meant the destruction of his beautiful country." Halifax instructed Newton on the 21st

> You should urge the Czech Government to withdraw this reply and urgently consider an alternative that takes account of realities.[94]

Under such great pressure, Benes saw Newton and the French Ambassador that evening, and told them that he had accepted the Anglo-French proposal and left the Czech fate in the hands of Britain and France.[95] Meanwhile, Henderson and

Ribbentrop arranged Chamberlain's next journey, and it was decided that the Prime Minister would fix the time with the Fuhrer on the 22nd at Godesberg.[96]

During three days before that date, Chamberlain summoned the full Cabinet meetings twice to have further discussion on the guarantee and method of transferring the Sudetenland. It was generally agreed that the guarantee to Czechoslovakia was a key step to prevent further aggression. However, as to the type of guarantee, Halifax raised the question,

> If, ... it was decided to have a joint guarantee, and Germany, being one of the guarantor countries, committed an act of aggression, would the other guarantor countries be excused from coming to Czechoslovakia's help? If, however, the guarantee was several, and other countries failed to fulfill their obligations, this country might find itself alone in supporting Czechoslovakia.

Chamberlain analysed,

> it was not right to assume that the guarantee committed us to maintaining the existing boundaries of Czechoslovakia. The guarantee merely related to unprovoked aggression. ... Its main value would lie in its deterrent effect.
>
> the right plan was to have a joint guarantee, and to provide for a meeting of the guarantors to decide in any particular case whether "unprovoked aggression" had taken place.

He then suggested that the guarantor countries should be Britain, France and Russia, probably including Italy; and they should invite Germany to sign a separate pact of non-aggression with Czechoslovakia. The Ministers generally agreed with the Prime Minister. As to transferring an area with over 50% German inhabitants, the Cabinet came to the conclusion that "German troops should not be allowed to cross the frontier until an international force had reached Czechoslovak territory."

In addition, Chamberlain was quite optimistic over obtaining some concessions from Hitler such as the demobilisation of the German Army and Herr Henlein's Freikorps, and even, "to get Hitler to repeat his declaration that if he obtained incorporation of the Sudeten Germans in the Reich he would be satisfied."[97]

Public opinion varied on the Anglo-French proposal of September 18 with growing dislike of it. *The Times* and the *Sunday Times* held the standpoint close to the Government's; *The Times* demonstrated in its leading article on the 20th that,

based on this proposal, "the ultimate gain will be more real than the immediate sacrifice" to the Czechs. Whereas the *Manchester Guardian* and the *News Chronicle* were critical of the plan, and the Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* wrote that the Anglo-French proposal was an "ultimatum, with a short time-limit".[98]

On the afternoon of the 21st, after a full meeting of Labour Executives, it was decided that Attlee and Greenwood should see the Prime Minister with the purpose of examining the Anglo-French plan of the 18th in detail because it seemed to them no details had been settled. The two Labour Leaders had "a disagreeable interview" with Chamberlain. Attlee said to him, "You have abandoned these people (the Czechs -- Author) completely. You have made an absolute surrender. All Eastern Europe will now fall under Hitler's sway. We are full of the most profound disgust. This is one of the greatest disasters in British history." But Chamberlain "had become steelier and steelier, smiling less and snarling more."[99]

The next day Chamberlain had left for Germany. When Churchill went to 10 Downing Street, the Cabinet told him that the Prime Minister would put to Hitler the terms discussed in the Cabinet meeting, including demobilisation. After his return, Winston told his friends and supporters, that if Hitler refused the terms, "we shall have war." However, on the very moment, while he was laying his proposal before Hitler at Godesberg Chamberlain said nothing about demobilisation.[100]

3. Godesberg

On the afternoon of September 22, Hitler met Chamberlain in Godesberg. When the Prime Minister told the Chancellor that he had successfully induced his Cabinet, and the French and Czech Governments to agree to the principle of self-determination, and that the Sudetenland would be transferred to the Reich by an orderly operation involving the intervention of an international commission, Hitler replied that these proposals were out of date. He insisted on two new points, which had not been discussed at Berchtesgaden. One was that he must support, due to German friendship with Poland and Hungary, the demands on Czech territory from these two countries. The other was that due to the urgency of the Sudeten problem, he declared that the problem should be settled "definitely and completely" by October 1. If he failed to do this, he would, instead of a "peaceful solution", pursue a

"military solution", namely, to establish a frontier "not on a national but on a strategic basis". As regards the suggestion of a nonaggression pact between Germany and Czechoslovakia, the Chancellor replied that he could only conclude such a pact when all problems including Polish and Hungarian demands had been settled.

Shocked by the German fresh demands, Chamberlain felt "both disappointed and puzzled." He reminded Hitler of what the latter had stated at Berchtesgaden. In order to help Germany, he "had risked his whole political career." Now these unexpected new demands would put him in most embarrassing position. He begged the Fuhrer to moderate the terms, but Hitler did not budge an inch. The first interview broke up "without any reference to a subsequent meeting."[101]

In their phone conversation that evening, Chamberlain told Halifax that the interview with Hitler was "most unsatisfactory".[102] However, he was not really prepared to shut the door, nor was Hitler. In his letter to Hitler that evening, Chamberlain said that he would communicate the Chancellor's proposal to the Czech Government, who in his opinion would refuse to accept these terms. He appealed to the Fuhrer once again that "there must surely be alternatives to your proposal... ."[103]

Hitler's reply came the next afternoon, in which the Fuhrer, in spite of using some moderate language, insisted on all the demands that he had put forward the previous day.[104]

Nevertheless Chamberlain's "patience" was "not yet finally exhausted".[105] During the adjournment, he wrote to Hitler again, proving conciliatory, and asked the latter to make these proposals in the form of memo, which he would pass to Czech Government.[106] When the letter was handed to Ribbentrop by Wilson and Henderson, both sides agreed that Chamberlain should come to see Hitler again that evening so as to discuss the memo.[107]

At the evening meeting, when he read the German memo attached with an illustrated map, which showed that the operation of evacuation and handing over of Sudetenland should be completed by September 28, the Prime Minister was outraged by its language and manner more than by its content. "That's an ultimatum", he exclaimed to Hitler, "you have made no effort to assist my attempts to secure peace." However, he told Hitler that he could not either accept or reject the memo. The only thing he could do was to transfer it to the Czech Government.[108] After a long and

hard discussion, the Chancellor at last agreed to postpone the operation until October 1. "You are the only man," he said to Chamberlain, "to whom I have ever made a concession."[109]

In a private talk after the interview, Hitler assured Chamberlain that Sudetenland was his last territorial ambition in Europe. In addition, he wanted very earnestly to be friends with England.[110]

As soon as he returned on the 24th, the Prime Minister summoned a Ministers' meeting at 3 and then a Cabinet meeting at 5.30 in the same afternoon. He reported to his colleagues what the Fuhrer had newly demanded, including their private talk. Although Hitler's behaviour at Godesberg was obviously untrustworthy in other's eyes, Chamberlain "was satisfied that Hitler was speaking the truth." He thought that "he had now established an influence over Herr Hitler, and that the latter trusted him and was willing to work with him."[111] In the face of disagreement from most Ministers including Hoare, the Prime Minister tried to persuade the Cabinet that

> it was a wonderful opportunity to put an end to the horrible nightmare of the present armament race. That seemed to him to be the big thing in the present issue.

He continued,

> the Cabinet would examine very carefully the differences between the proposals made last Sunday and the present proposals, and would consider whether those differences justified us in going to war.

He justified his proposal of surrender by reminding his colleagues of the terrible picture of war -- particularly modern war, which should be avoided at any price at the moment.

However, his persuasion seemed not as effective as usual. In the course of the discussion, foreseeing that Benes would definitely refuse Hitler's proposal, Duff Cooper said that if Germany attacked Czechoslovakia, "public opinion would bring about a position in which we should have to intervene in the war." He warned that intervention might come "too late" unless Britain took action promptly. He believed that if the Government made this clear to the Germans, it "might yet result in deterring them from war." In addition, he did not have any confidence in the promises that Hitler had made to the Prime Minister.[112] Hore-Belisha, War Secretary, reminded the Cabinet that the Chiefs of Staff "urged the importance of early

mobilisation." Hoare also proposed that if Hitler attacked Czechoslovakia, "France, Russia and ourselves would at once make war on him."

It was obvious that Chamberlain was very isolated in the Cabinet this time because it appeared that there was only Halifax who shared the Prime Minister's view by saying that "notwithstanding political difficulties, he doubted whether the disadvantages of accepting Hitler's proposals were so great as to justify us in going to war." In order to break the deadlock, he suggested that mobilisation should wait until a general policy had been decided. With Chamberlain's support, this suggestion was generally agreed to by the Cabinet.[113]

That day Cadogan "was completely horrified" by the calmness of Chamberlain and Halifax towards "total surrender". He wrote Halifax a note to indicate his opposite opinion, but this had "no effect" at first. However, it gave Halifax "a sleepless night". Restlessly shuffling ideas from late night to dawn, the Foreign Secretary completely changed his mind.[114] Next morning when the Cabinet met again Halifax, in spite of feeling "a brute",[115] said that his opinion was "changing".

> What made him hesitate was that it might be held that there was a distinction in principle between orderly and disorderly transfer with all that the latter implied for the minorities in the transferred areas.

He was not at all satisfied with the fact that

> Hitler had given us nothing and that he was dictating terms, just as though he had won a war but without having had to fight. ... he did not feel that it would be right to put pressure on Czechoslovakia to accept. We should lay the case before them. If they rejected it he imagined that France would join in, and if France went in we should join with them.

He concluded that working most closely with the Prime Minister throughout the long crisis, "he was not quite sure that their minds were still altogether at one."[116] His change of view was "a horrible blow" to Chamberlain, who blamed his Foreign Secretary, "Night conclusions are seldom taken in the right perspective."[117]

In addition, Halifax informed the Cabinet of Amery's letter to the Prime Minister, in which the Labour Leader said that they were bound to tell Hitler:

> that the demand is in our opinion unreasonable, that we cannot blame the Czechs for rejecting it, and that if, instead of considering reasonable alternatives, he invades Czechoslovakia, he must realize the consequences ...

> We all applauded your first going to Berchtesgaden. Many of us were greatly perturbed by what we understood to be the proposals forced upon the Czechs -- going far beyond what I suggested to you earlier -- and immensely relieved to hear that you were standing up to Hitler once you realized that even such a settlement, which gave him more than he could ever have expected, was not enough for him. But if the country and the House should once suppose that you were prepared to acquiesce in or even endorse this last demands, there would be a tremendous revulsion of feeling against you.

This view was agreed by Duff Cooper and Hore-Belisha.[118] Hoare did not entirely stand by the Prime Minister either, suggesting the "counter proposals" that the transfer of the Sudetenland should be "in an orderly fashion." He went on to propose that Britain, France and Russia should open joint military conversations.[119] It was obvious as Cadogan recorded that "Cabinet anyhow wouldn't allow P.M. to make any further concessions (and I'm sure country wouldn't)."[120] In the face of strong disagreement, Chamberlain did not want to give up. He summed up by saying that "he did not think that it was necessary to take any immediate decision" because he thought that they should consult with the French first before a decision was made. This was generally accepted by the Ministers.[121]

In the evening, the British statesmen met the Daladier-Bonnet team, which came to London again for the consultation. Daladier thought Hitler's proposal was unacceptable and France would fight if Germany attacked Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain tried to move the French in the direction of concession. He explained Hitler's plan again and again in detail, so as to show there was no great difference between it and the Anglo-French proposal of September 18. Simon, who was not at all an unequivocal opponent against Chamberlain, now helped the Prime Minister to discourage the French by drawing attention to France's military inferiority *vis-a-vis* Germany if war broke out. Hoare also emphasised his disagreement with Daladier by saying that even if Britain and France were engaged in war with Germany there was no way to prevent Czechoslovakia being overrun. Realising Daladier did not think there was any other proposal to make for concession except the original Anglo-French plan, Chamberlain continued to search for another way out. The meeting was adjourned at night without any encouraging result.[122]

After the Anglo-French meeting, Cabinet members met for the third time within 24 hours at 11.30 that night. Hailsham, Lord Chancellor, pointed out that the French

seemed not to have decided "what they would do." They wanted "to keep Germany guessing, in the hope that Europe would take the view that France was fulfilling her obligations." The Prime Minister took the chance to put forward his new idea that he should write a personal letter[123] to the Fuhrer and made one last appeal to him. He proposed to ask the Fuhrer

> to agree to the appointment of a Joint Commission, with German and Czech members and a British representative. This Commission would not start *de novo*, but would consider how the proposals accepted by the present Czech Government could be put into effect in an orderly manner and as quickly as possible, and without shocking public opinion.

His purpose was "unwilling to leave unexplored any possible chance of avoiding war". He told his colleagues that he would authorise Wilson as "Confidential Adviser" to see the Fuhrer and deliver the letter in person. In this way, if the letter failed to secure any response from Hitler, Wilson should be authorised to give a warning as follows,

> The French Government have informed us that, if the Czechs reject the Memorandum and Germany attacks Czechoslovakia, they will fulfil their obligations to Czechoslovakia. Should the forces of France in consequence become engaged in active hostilities against Germany, we shall feel obliged to support them.

Chamberlain thought it was a desperate try and even he himself was not optimistic as to the result. Simon again came to Chamberlain's aid and appealed to his colleagues that, knowing Hitler as he did, the Prime Minister thought that "this course was a useful one," so "the Cabinet should act on it." Duff Cooper, who objected to any further concession though, did not want to lose this last slice of hope either. In the end, the Cabinet accepted Chamberlain's proposal.[124]

Next morning (the 26th), the Prime Minister first had an interview with General Gamelin, who came to London for consultation. The General estimated that if war broke out, the Czech Army "would continue to exist as a fighting force" although it would not hold out against the Germans very long -- probably for two weeks.[125] Then the British Ministers had another meeting with the French statesmen. Chamberlain informed Daladier of his plan for a last attempt. The latter appreciated the action that the Prime Minister had taken.[126]

It was not unexpected that Wilson reported in the evening from Berlin that he had a "very violent hour" with Hitler, who even did not want to listen to Chamberlain's letter. There was no indication for "compromise or even modification". The German Chancellor fixed September 28, 2 p.m. as the deadline for the Czech acceptance of his demand.[127] This being so, the Confidential Adviser had read Chamberlain's warning to the Fuhrer before he returned.[128]

Meanwhile, the Godesberg terms became known to the public. Being agitated, most newspapers hardened their attitude towards Germany. The article by the Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* says, "The demands are as peremptory and uncompromising as if they represented, not as the basis of negotiation for a peaceful settlement, but a dictation to an enemy beaten in the field -- which Czechoslovakia is not yet." *The Times* issued a warning the same as Wilson had read to Hitler; on the other hand, its leading article appealed that "it is still not too late to stop this great tragedy, and for the peoples of all nations to insist on settlement by free negotiation."[129]

On the same day (the 26th), a group of politicians gathered first in General Spears' office and then in Churchill's flat in the evening, including Churchill, Amery, Lord Cecil, George Lloyd, Lord Lloyd, Sir Edward Grigg, Sir Robert Horne, Boothing, Bracken, Law, Archie Sinclair, Lytton, Spears and one or two others, most of whom were Conservatives and others who were either Opposition leaders or prominent League of Nations figures. "The feeling was passionate" as Churchill recorded. They all agreed, "We must get Russia in." Churchill told them that he had just seen the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, suggesting again that the Government should make a joint declaration with France and Russia showing "the unity of sentiment and purpose" against Hitler's aggression. He also urged the Prime Minister to mobilise the Fleet at once. It seemed to have a temporary effect on policy-making because that very evening being approved by Halifax the Press Department of the F.O. issued a communiqué, which was similar to Wilson's warning to Hitler. Chamberlain also agreed to mobilise the Fleet on the same night. In the end, these politicians decided that "If Chamberlain rats again we shall form a united block against him." But they did not think that he would rat, and therefore they should "rally behind him."[130]

However, the critics were too optimistic. Chamberlain's consideration of mobilisation was delayed until the next day. While a small meeting of Ministers was held, Chiefs of Staff were called in. The Ministers agreed with their advice that "it was important to impress on the French Government that they should not take any offensive action until they had consulted with the British Government." As to their suggestion of mobilising the Navy, the Prime Minister approved with hesitation.[131] However, he did not mention a word about this decision in his broadcast of the same evening as he had promised to do.[132]

Before his broadcast, Chamberlain had a discussion with Halifax, Cadogan and Wilson. Chamberlain instructed Wilson to draft a telegram, telling the Czechs to accept Hitler's memo. Although Halifax and Cadogan showed their disagreement, the former sent the document separately to Prague, Paris and Berlin.[133] However, even in the face of this appeal, the German attitude was negative on the grounds that the Czechs must accept German plan "at once".[134]

All hope seemed gone. In his broadcast a few minutes after 8, the Prime Minister addressed,

> How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas-masks here because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing. ... at this moment, I see nothing further that I can usefully do in the way of mediation."[135]

Cooper criticised this broadcast which did not mention France or offer a word of sympathy for Czechoslovakia. The only sympathy expressed was for Hitler. After listening to it, Churchill felt "most indignant", and rang the Admiralty up to say that "we're preparing to scuttle."[136]

4. Munich

Shortly after his broadcast, the Prime Minister received Hitler's reply to his private letter of the 26th. While insisting on his demand, the Fuhrer however pointed out that German Army would not march beyond the region which the Czech Government had agreed to cede, and that the plebiscite would be carried out by free vote, and that Germany would participate a joint guarantee to Czechoslovakia.[137] Reading this letter, Chamberlain reflected that differences and obscurities "had been narrowed down still further to a point where really it was inconceivable that they

could not be settled by negotiations."[138] He immediately summoned the Cabinet meeting and told the Ministers that Hitler's letter might "afford some ground on which a further proposal for a peaceful settlement could be based."[139]

On the morning of the 28th, without consultation of any member of the Cabinet, not even of Halifax, the Prime Minister made the decision alone to send Hitler a "last last" appeal, after discussing with Wilson and his another intimate adviser.[140] In this "last last" appeal, Chamberlain assured Hitler that he could get everything without fighting.[141] At the same time, he sent a personal message to Mussolini, asking the Duce to urge Hitler to agree to his proposal.[142] After receiving his letter, Mussolini immediately instructed the Italian Ambassador in Berlin to see Ribbentrop and to say that, Italy would certainly "stand by Germany" yet in view of Chamberlain's proposal, Mussolini hoped that Hitler would postpone military action for 24 hours.[143] France also agreed to cooperate with Britain on the same lines.[144]

That morning, as Wheeler-Bennett described, men and women waking "with an eerie feeling" that it was "the last day" of peace.[145] However, there is little evidence to suggest that the public opposed facing war. In the afternoon, the House was summoned to debate, but actually only listen to the Prime Minister's speech. Chamberlain gave account of his visit to Germany and said that the Fuhrer was prepared "to risk a world war" for Sudeten Germans. Harold Nicolson noticed, "as he said these words a shudder of horror passed though the House of Commons." Chamberlain then told the MPs that Hitler had just accepted his last last appeal and invited him, Daladier and Mussolini to Munich, to settle the Sudeten problem. "For a second," Harold Nicolson wrote, "the House was hushed in absolute silence. And then the whole House burst into a roar of cheering, since they knew that this might mean peace." The whole House rose to applaud to their Prime Minister except a few MPs such as Churchill, Amery, Eden and Harold Nicolson who remained seated.[146] Like the House, the Press approved the announcement with enthusiasm except a few papers such as the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily Herald* and the *News Chronicle*, which held reservations.[147] Harold Nicolson described the situation as "mass hysteria".[148]

On the 29th, at Churchill's suggestion, the critics wanted to send a telegram to the Prime Minister in Munich, asking him "not to betray the Czechs." The telegram was to be signed by Churchill, Lord Cecil, Attlee, Eden, Archie Sinclair and Lloyd.

But Eden refused to sign because he thought "it would be interpreted as a vendetta against Chamberlain." Attlee refused too without the approval of his Party. The Oppositions failed to act at this juncture.[149]

At midday on the 29th, the four heads of the Munich Powers met. After long discussion, an agreement was signed at midnight. The Czech evacuation of Sudetenland would begin on October 1 and be complete by the 10th.[150] While they were waiting for the draftsmen, Chamberlain asked Hitler whether they could have a private talk. The Fuhrer "jumped at the idea." With only the interpreter present, they talked about the issues of Spain, economic relations and disarmament. Finally, Chamberlain succeeded in inviting Hitler to sign a joint agreement, which he had prepared and brought with him. It said

> the German Fuhrer and Chancellor and the British Prime Minister,... are agreed in recognising that the question of Anglo-German relations is of the first importance for the two countries and for Europe.
>
> We regard the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two people never to go to war with one another again.[151]

Then, Chamberlain and Daladier called for the Czech representatives, who were waiting for the result, and handed them the Munich Agreement. With this arrangement, the Czech Government announced their acceptance of the terms on September 30, 5 p.m.[152]

IV. GOLDEN AGE OF APPEASEMENT

1. Chamberlain's Confidence in Appeasement and Policy of Rearmament

Stepping down from the aeroplane at Heston on the afternoon of the 30th, Chamberlain waved the joint agreement -- the receipt of selling Czechoslovakia -- to the cheering crowds.[153] When he spoke at 10 Downing Street, he said,

> This is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honour. I believe it is peace for our time.[154]

The BBC created an overwhelming support for the Prime Minister "by broadcasting in numerous news bulletins information about the tremendous fan mail

received by the Premier", giving the impression that all these letters were letters of praise.[155] However, the fact was that, of these letters, many were letters of protest, which were not divulged to the public. Madge and Harrison investigated that

> Yet from one public meeting alone, in a provincial town where an observer happened to be present, 800 letters of protest to the Premier were actually written, paid for and posted by members of the audience.[156]

Oliver Harvey's diaries gave another evidence, as he wrote on September 30, "Vast crowds in the streets -- hysterical cheers and enthusiasm. P.M. on balcony at Buckingham Palace. But many feel it to be a great humiliation."[157]

The general feelings both in the Press and in the House were, as Eden summed up later, that some hoped that "we were at the beginning of the better things", the others, however, "very reluctantly were convinced that we had gained nothing but brief respite at the end of which more demands would be imposed by similar methods."[158]

From October 3, the House held four days of debates. The Labour and Liberal dissenters were little different from the Government supporters on the point that they felt "relief that war has not come this time" due to the Prime Minister's attempt.[159] However, they condemned Chamberlain for abjectly surrendering to the threat of force. Attlee pointed out,

> The events of these last few days constitute one of the greatest diplomatic defeats that this country and France have ever sustained. There can be no doubt that it is a tremendous victory for Herr Hitler. Without firing a shot, by the mere display of military force, he has achieved a dominating position in Europe which Germany failed to win after four years of war. He has overturned the balance of power in Europe. He has destroyed the last fortress of democracy in Eastern Europe which stood in the way of his ambition. He has opened his way to the food, the oil and the resources which he requires in order to consolidate his military power, ...[160]

Dalton asked, "is it peace now, or is it only a short breathing space and a fatal worsening of strategical and economic condition ... before an inevitable war?" He foresaw, "we shall not have to wait very long before Herr Hitler will dictate, first to his immediate neighbours and later to all Europe, and in the end to the British Empire and the world at large."[161] Unlike other speakers, Churchill did not start his address with "tributes" to the Prime Minister. He said, "Do not suppose that this is the end.

This is only the beginning of the reckoning. This is only the first sip, the first foretaste of a bitter cup which will be proffered to us ..." He thought that "in future the Czechoslovak State cannot be maintained as an independent entity."[162]

Meanwhile, the Opposition group including Churchill, Eden, Cooper, Amery, Harold Nicolson and six or seven other MPs decided that they preferred to "abstain" rather than that some should abstain and some vote against the Government.[163]

Although he asked the House not to read too much into his words that he had spoken at 10 Downing Street, Chamberlain, no doubt, believed, as he wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury on October 2, that "we have at last opened the way to that general appeasement which alone can save the world from chaos."[164]

At the first Cabinet meeting (October 3) after he returned, the Prime Minister was asked of his view about the argument that was strongly held within and outside of the Government:

> we must never again allow ourselves to get into the position in which we had been in the last few weeks, and that every effort should be made to intensify our rearmament programme.[165]

In reply, Chamberlain said he "would like to make his own position in the matter clear." He analysed the relationship between appeasement and rearmament:

> Ever since he had been Chancellor of the Exchequer, he had been oppressed with the sense that the burden of armaments might break our backs. This had been one of the factors which had led him to the view that it was necessary to try and resolve the causes which were responsible for the armament race.
>
> He thought that we were now in a more hopeful position, and that the contacts which had been established with the Dictator Powers opened up the possibility that we might be able to reach some agreement with them which would stop the armament race.

On the other hand, he did not think it was right "to stop rearming until we were convinced that other countries would act in the same way." Nor did he agree that "we should at once embark on a great increase in our armaments programme."[166] A few weeks later (on October 31), when the Minister had another discussion on the issue of rearmament, the Secretary for Air warned that even from the defensive point of view, "at the present time we were seriously deficient as compared with Germany. Indeed our weakness might be said to be likely to provoke aggression by others."

The Prime Minister once again retorted the argument that proposed acceleration of rearmament,

> Our Foreign policy was one of appeasement: We must aim at establishing relations with the Dictator Powers which will lead to a settlement in Europe and to a sense of stability.
>
> There had been a good deal of talk in the country and in the Press about the need for rearmament by this country. In Germany and Italy it was suspected that this rearmament was directed against them, and it was important that we should not encourage these suspicions.
>
> our rearmament was directed to securing our own safety and not for purposes of aggression against other countries.

He emphasised that the purpose of the Munich Agreement was not to gain time for rearmament,

> A good deal of false emphasis had been placed on rearmament, as though one result of the Munich Agreement had been that it would be necessary for us to add to our rearmament programmes. Acceleration of existing programmes was one thing, but increases in the scope of our programme which would lead to a new arms race was a different proposition.
>
> It might be possible to take active steps and to follow up the Munich Agreement by other measures, aimed at securing better relations. The putting into effect of the Anglo-Italian Agreement would be one step in this direction. He also hoped that some day we should be able to secure a measure of limitation of armaments, but it was too soon to say when this would prove possible. An improvement in confidence was first necessary.[167]

The above evidence demonstrates that Chamberlain's effect at Munich was not aimed to buy time for military preparation against the dictators. What he proposed was that with rearmament to a certain extent that was merely sufficient for the Britain's own safety, he was waiting for the right moment to slow it down, and enjoy the fruits of Munich. British rearmament after Munich did not slow down because this right moment never appeared. In the winter of 1938 - 39, there emerged a false alarm that Germany might invade Holland, and then instead Hitler raped Prague in the coming March.

Some review may bring a fresh light to the picture of rearmament. Since Chamberlain cut one third of expenditure on the DRC four-year rearmament

programme in 1934, British rearmament had followed his policy of "cheapest defence". Immediately after the Anschluss, Chamberlain told his colleagues at the Cabinet meeting of March 22 that

> there was an underlying resentment at the idea of constantly having to knuckle under to the Dictators for lack of sufficient strength. The best way to meet this view was to announce an acceleration of re-armament and opportunities for personnel service.[168]

Although rearmament had been again put on the agenda, there was little vigour and determination to carry it out. Chamberlain and Simon were "against thorough-going rearmament because of its effect on our foreign trade." They were very optimistic about "the good behaviour of the Dictators."[169] Halifax was also very ambivalent as he said to the FPC members on March 21 that he was "in favour of a more vigorous line in rearmament but feared that it should not expose ourselves to rebuffs from Germany and so lose all hope of improving relations with her."[170]

In 1937, the Cabinet approved the total cost of the defence programme during the next five years (1937-41) as £1,500 million. But the three Defence Departments estimated that the programme would require at least £2,000 million.[171] Simon, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, kept demanding that the Defence Services reduce their budget. Duff Cooper felt that any discussion with Simon for increasing expenditure on the rearmament programme was "pure waste of time." It was hardly surprising to find in the Cabinet document of that time that "the Defence Services were working under instructions to cut down estimates", and that "this was hardly consistent with an announcement that we were accelerating our armament."[172] General Sir Henry Pownall, revealed the resentment of the Chiefs of Staff in his Diary of March 21,

> At the Cabinet this week there was much talk of speeding up and W.O. could do this and that. ... But when the Cabinet minutes came out it appeared that all this wonderful business was to be done 'within the amount of money available for the Army' -- and as that has not been settled -- it has been indeterminable for months and is likely to remain so -- it simply means that the Treasury have a complete free hand, at any point and on any project, to say it can't be done.[173]

Even after the Rhineland crisis, the policy of rearmament was "business as usual", which indicated that rearmament should not be put in the position where it was more important than the normal industrial and commercial life. The rule lasted until the spring of 1938.[174] This certainly explains why the phrase, "Britain was not ready for

war" had been repeatedly heard since 1931, and why British rearmament had always lagged far behind Germany's.

On the other hand, Germany spent about three times as much on armament as Britain in the years 1933-38.[175] As he started the second phase of rearmament in the summer of 1936 under the Second Four-Year Plan, Hitler gave two principles to Goering, who was appointed as Plenipotentiary of the Plan:

I. The German Army must be ready for commitment in four years.
II. The German economy must be ready for war in four years.[176]

The following tabular forms explore approximately the gap between the two sides in the years 1936-38:

Table I. Rearmament expenditure (£ million)[177]

	UK	Germany
1936	£186	£ 500 (RM 6 billion)
1937	£265	£ 667 (RM 8 billion)
1938	£400	£1,500 (RM 18 billion)

Table II. Percentage of G.N.P. devoted to military expenditure[178]

	UK	Germany
1936	4	13
1937	6	13
1938	7	17

The peace-time strength of the German Army in August 1939 was approximately equal to the total of the British, French and Polish armies.[179] Although it was much stronger than that of Germany, the British Navy had to defend the whole Empire. In addition, a sea blockade could not bring Germany to her knees in a short period if war broke out.

As regards the air force, German first line aircraft had exceeded in number to Britain's by the end of 1936.[180] Although rearmament in the air took an almost leading share among those of the three Services, the programme was not promising. From 1936-39, Air Staff worked out several Schemes to improve the Air strength. Immediately after Munich, "Scheme M" was formulated, which was the last one before the outbreak of war, showing as follows:

Table III. Aircraft total comparison between Britain and Germany[181]

	Oct. 1938		Apr. 1, 1939		Aug. 1, 1939	
	First-line	Reserve	First-line	Reserve	First-line	Reserve
UK	1,606	412	1,782	977	1,890	1,502
Germany	3,200	2,400	3,680	2,700	4,030	3,000

According to this Scheme, the total aircraft of the RAF would only reach less than 1/2 of Germany's by August 1, 1939 -- one month before the war. Even so, when the Cabinet discussed the Scheme, Simon pointed out that this programme was "so costly as to raise serious doubts whether it can be financed... without the gravest danger to the country's stability." He suggested that only the fighters should have priority in being increased, which was supported by Chamberlain and other Ministers. In addition to financial stringency, the programme suffered from the problem that only 50% Reserve aircraft in Scheme M could be produced due to the industrial situation.[182] Under these circumstances, at the outbreak of war the RAF had only a total of 3,860 aircraft against that of Germany's 9,220. The inferior margin had not been much narrowed down in the post-Munich period.[183]

2. Failure of The Guarantee to Czechoslovakia

When Chamberlain sold the Sudetenland at the Munich conference, the only reward he obtained from Hitler was that Germany promised to join in guaranteeing the remnant of Czech territory after the Polish and Hungarian minorities had been settled.[184] Sir Thomas Inskip, Defence Secretary, said on behalf of the Government in the House on October 4 that although a guarantee would not be technically in force until settlement between Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary had been achieved,

> Czechoslovakia to treat the guarantee as being now in force. In the event, therefore, of an act of unprovoked aggression against Czechoslovakia, His Majesty's Government, however, feel under a moral obligation to Majesty's Government would certainly feel bound to take all steps in their power to see that the integrity of Czechoslovakia is preserved.[185]

In fact, Hitler did not at all want to guarantee the new boundaries of the Czech State. A few days after Munich, he consulted with General Keitel on the plan of destroying the whole of Czechoslovakia.[186] On October 21, he issued the directive

under the title "Liquidation of the Remainder of the Czech State".[187] Within two months, an additional order to this directive was circulated to the Army Chiefs of Staff. It reads,

> To the outside world also it must be made clear that this is merely an act of pacification and not an operation of war.
>
> For the same reason provision for the exercise of executive power by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army is confined to the newly occupied territory and limited to a short period.[188]

Since frontier rectifications between Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary had been completed in November, the British Government sent a note to the German Government on February 8 of 1939, concerning the matter of the joint guarantee to Czechoslovakia. In the German reply, which was received in March 3, Hitler considered it necessary "to await firstly a clarification of internal development of Czecho-Slovakia."[189]

The British policy-makers were not alerted by Hitler's delay in guarantee. In spite of the growing German threat to Czechoslovak independence, Henderson reported on February 18, "My definite impression ... is that Herr Hitler does not contemplate any adventures at the moment and all stories and rumours to the contrary are completely without real foundation." He urged the Government "publicly both in press and speeches" to stress "our full reliance on Herr Hitler's peaceful intentions as it is harmful to show suspicion of them."[190] Following him, Chamberlain, who had realised that "British public opinion was now violently anti-dictator",[191] tried to soothe the public by telling the press on March 10 that "Europe was settling down to a period of tranquillity." Hoare also talked about the hopes of a "Five Year Peace Plan" leading to a "Golden Age of Prosperity."[192]

Only five days later, Hitler ordered the German troops across the German-Czech frontier on the early morning of March 15 before he forced Hacha, the new President of Czechoslovakia, to sign an agreement that Hacha agreed to leave the Czech people and country "under the protection of the German Reich."[193]

The rape of Prague was a nasty shock to the British Government. On the very morning after the F.O. received Henderson's report,[194] the Cabinet was summoned. It was very important and urgent to discuss the guidelines for the statement that the

Prime Minister would make in the House that afternoon, in which he would try to get rid of the responsibility of the guarantee to Czechoslovakia. Simon said openly that

> the statement should make it clear that the Government no longer had any obligation, legal or moral, under the guarantee to Czechoslovakia.

Halifax held the same ground. Chamberlain tried to find excuses by saying

> he thought the fundamental fact was that the State whose frontiers we had undertaken to guarantee against unprovoked aggression had now completely broken up.
>
> It might, no doubt, be true that the disruption of Czechoslovakia had been largely engineered by Germany, but our guarantee was not a guarantee against the exercise of moral pressure.

His argument was supported by the Ministers present. In the end, the Cabinet decided to postpone the visit of the President of the Board of Trade to Berlin and authorised Chamberlain and Halifax to draft the statement along the lines that had been discussed.[195]

The public unanimously showed anger against Hitler's elimination of Czecho-Slovakia with the view that appeasement was no longer suitable towards Germany. *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* held a similar ground, in which they condemned Germany on one hand and disapproved of British military intervention on the other. The *Daily Herald*, however, criticised Chamberlain for his policy encouraging German invasion. Many newspapers appealed for cooperation with France and Russia against further aggression.[196]

On the opposition side, Churchill's and Eden's groups had been working, since Munich, for enlarging basis of Government -- joining a National Government. Eden and his supporters decided that "we must support the Government, and that Anthony should speak. ... The rest to keep silent." Churchill, "perhaps hoping for office if he did not embarrass his leaders at this point, left the attack to Anthony Eden and his followers."[197]

In the debates on the afternoon of March 15, Chamberlain's policy was criticised from many quarters. Sinclair condemned Chamberlain for "deliberately postponing Debates in this House until they could have no further influence on the course of events." He urged the Prime Minister "to gather our friends to us," particularly to gather France, Russia and America, and Britain should "take the initiative in the

world in the direction of basing policy on the principles of law".[198] Eden, however, spoke in a quite mild language. He agreed with the Government's decision to postpone the Minister's visit to Berlin and appealed that "the situation was so serious that the time for party controversy had gone.[199]

Based on the line proposed by the Cabinet in the morning, the Prime Minister told the House that the Government could not "accordingly hold themselves any longer" bound by guarantee because Czecho-Slovakia "had now ceased to exist." Although he "bitterly" regretted "the manner and the method" of the German action, he was determined to continue appeasement:

> do not let us on that account be deflected from our course. Let us remember that the desire of all the peoples of the world still remains concentrated and good will which has so often been disturbed. The aim of this Government is now, as it has always been, to promote that desire and to substitute the method of discussion for the method of force in the settlement of differences. [200]

His statement left a very unsatisfactory impression. Cadogan commented, the Prime Minister "would go on with his 'policy' (?'appeasement'). Fatal!"[201]

V. COMMENT

Munich was the inevitably disastrous effect of pursuing appeasement for a long time, and it was not only the climax of appeasement, but also exceeded the scope of this policy, becoming a complete surrender. It is so notorious that it has been accompanied with condemnation since its birth. Apart from attacks from contemporary politicians that have been seen above, scholars' criticisms are no less than as sharp. Carr comments that Munich was a shame for Great Britain, "whose reputation had ... been lowered by a cowardly and unworthy act." Thorne cites a message from the British Ambassador in Tokyo of that time, as evidence of the world opinion on Munich:

> The effect of Munich accord on foreign opinion as seen from here is that perfidious Albion has been true to form and let her friends down again. ... The Japanese reaction ... is that we are prepared to put up with almost any indignity rather than fight. the result is that, all in all, our prestige is at a low ebb in the east....[202]

Even the appeasers and their supporters dare not justify it fully. Although he admires Munich as "a triumph", A. J. P. Taylor utters that "this was a triumph with

bitter fruits. ... Appeasement had lost its moral strength." Gilbert says with regret, "Munich was not appeasement's finest hour, but its most perverted. It was a distortion of all that appeasement stood for." Even Chamberlain had to confess in his Birmingham speech of March 17, 1939 that "I have never denied that the terms which I was able to secure at Munich were not those that I myself would have desired."[203] However, appeasers are rarely willing to bow to the criticisms and often try to find excuses for evading the responsibility. It is, therefore, necessary to investigate some of their arguments in order to explore further the nature and consequences of Munich.

The most frequently heard clichés are, as Henderson wrote in his memoirs, that "it was solely thanks to Mr. Chamberlain's courage and pertinacity that a futile and senseless war was averted."[204] But then, did Munich really avert or postpone war?

According to German documents, Hitler had previously planned the war against the Western Powers over Austria and Czechoslovakia by 1943-45.[205] Munich had offered him what he wanted without costing him a single shot. This not only nourished his ambitions, but also provided him with more favourable conditions to carry out his plan. He instructed the German press secretly after Munich (November 10),

> That we took advantage of the prevailing circumstances was, finally, perhaps the most decisive factor to bring about these achievements. The world situation in general appeared to me more than ever favourable to asserting our demands.[206]

His demands finally caused the Second World War in September 1939, which was 3 - 5 years earlier than he had planned.

Although the inevitability of war had been increased by the Czechoslovak crisis, it was still possible for the Western Powers to keep Hitler in check without war. At the Nuremberg trials, German Marshal von Keitel was asked that had the Western Powers stood by the Czechs, "would the Reich have attacked Czechoslovakia?" He answered, "Certainly not. We were not strong enough militarily. The object of Munich [...] was to get Russia out Europe, to gain time, and to complete the German armament."[207] General Halder also confessed that without Munich the opposing generals would have overthrown the Fuhrer if he had taken the risk of war against the West.[208] In that case, there might have been no World War Two.

Suppose war had occurred in 1938 instead of 1939, it could have only been a limited war rather than a general war because German armament had not yet reached the level of a total war. There was a serious lack of trained reserves and of essential resources. The West Wall had not been completed. The German Air Force, which relied on close ground support, was not able to execute a "knock-out blow" to Britain without bases in the Low Countries. Hitler knew very well at that moment that he could only afford a short and limited war (ideally for a few weeks and in no circumstances longer than a year) as told his Chief Commanders and Commanding Generals that "we cannot conduct a long war". In addition, he doubted that the Japanese and Italians would follow him unconditionally.[209] On the other hand, although British military preparation was deficient, the combination of British and French forces was by no means inferior to Germany's. In addition, Russia would have certainly come to the aid of the Czechs because of the Franco-Soviet Pact. Roumania, Yugoslavia and perhaps even Poland would also take the Czech side. The Czechoslovak army could mobilise up to 500,000, well trained and well equipped. An attack on Czechoslovakia would have meant a great loss of German forces. The Western Powers would have had the advantage if war had started in 1938. Duff Cooper had full confidence that they would win.

Therefore, the conclusion must be one of the following two: either Munich brought forward the Second World War instead of postponing it, or Munich did avert a short and limited war but paved the way for a long and general one.

Another typical argument is that Chamberlain's objective at Munich was to "gain time" for rearmament.[210] This argument is nullified by Chamberlain's own words at the Cabinet meetings of October 3 and 31. The Prime Minister strongly opposed the view that during the time gained by Munich, "it would be necessary for us to add to our rearmament programmes." He emphasised that Munich was "aimed at securing better relations" with the Dictator Powers. Allowing rearmament to go on for some time, he would reduce it if settlement could be achieved. He even dreamed that "some day we should be able to secure a measure of limitation of armaments" because rearmament nearly broke Britain's back.[211] The British rearmament was not slowed down after Munich because Hitler struck again too soon. If the appeasers and

their followers want to be really loyal to Chamberlain, they should interpret his Munich doctrine correctly.

The third argument is similar to that in the previous crises, namely, Britain was not able to save Czechoslovakia due to her own military weakness. Halifax wrote in him memoirs,

> No one who had the misfortune to preside over the Foreign Office at that time could ever ... forget that he had little or nothing in his hands with which to support his diplomatic efforts. ... thus the Foreign Secretary was like a player invited to stake, when he knew that if the fortune of the game turned against him he had nothing with which to redeem his pledge.[212]

He told the Cabinet members on March 22, 1938 that FPC had decided on no new commitment to Czechoslovakia based on the Report of Chiefs of Staff, which was "an extremely melancholy document." However, the fact was that, in spite of being a background for appeasement, the military weakness, in a strict sense, was not the cause of Munich because the FPC had decided the Czech fate before they read that Report. It was a fundamental belief among many FPC members that Czechoslovakia was "an artificial country", which was not worth fighting for even if Britain had the strength. It was a tactic shared by Chiefs of Staff that Central and Eastern Europe were not directly Britain's concern. They abandoned Churchill's proposal of "Grand Alliances" not because of military weakness, but because "this would be a long and complicated matter".[213]

The fourth argument was that Munich was supported by the people. Feiling quotes a number of people's letters to Chamberlain in order to show how much they thanked him for his bringing them peace, in which "they would not see their children killed, crippled, blinded, made imbecile".[214] It was true that many people admired their Prime Minister because they believed his words that he had brought home "peace for our time" and "peace with honour". If they had known that this "peace" in fact was a silent gathering of a world war, in which more of their children would be killed, crippled and blinded, and in particular if they had known that this war could have been prevented during the Rhineland period if the Government had taken proper action to support France, it was very doubtful that they would have written these letters of praise. Indeed, the many letters of protest against the Prime Minister's behaviour at Munich were never broadcast on the air. As has been pointed out in the

previous chapters, the public was kept in the dark about policy-making. The atmosphere, which favoured Munich, was largely man-made by curbing the media and by misleading the people.

In fact, the public did not want to shrink from war. From September 27 to 28, war seemed inevitable and imminent. There was no evidence to suggest that the public was not prepared to face the war against Hitler's aggression. After Munich, many people felt humiliated. Even Chamberlain found out, as he said on October 22, that "a lot of people seem to me to be losing their heads and talking and thinking as though Munich had made war more instead of less imminent."[215]

There is a one-sided argument sympathetic to Chamberlain, that the Prime Minister's first motive at Munich was "simply the rightness of peace and the wrongness of war."[216] Attention should be drawn to the fact that Chamberlain, like many statesmen of his generation, had a fear of war. They were afraid of taking the risk of fighting against the aggressive powers because they worried that modern war would destroy civilisation. However, in spite of great loss of life, the Second World War did not ruin the world but the aggressive powers instead. Prevention of war requires a strategist's clear-sightedness and the courage of facing war rather than a fear of risk. It might be true that his hope for peace was one of the reasons that Chamberlain pursued a policy of surrender at Munich. However, historical comment does not weigh personal motive very much, but considers the effects and results more when it looks at policy. Therefore, no matter how genuine his motive was, Chamberlain followed a policy which plunged the country (and in a certain sense, Europe and the world) into catastrophe. In other words, his policy led history in a direction which was opposite to his motive even if it was really sincere.

It is often suggested that Chamberlain played according to the German tune because he was cheated by Hitler. Halifax argued that "no one can fairly charge him (Chamberlain -- Author) with lack of frankness."[217] However, even through the surface phenomena it is not difficult to find out that Chamberlain knew very well, after the Anschluss, that "force is the only argument Germany understands." At Godesberg, he was very "disappointed" by Hitler's behaviour. Nevertheless, he regarded himself as a man who was able to set up "a reasonable understanding" with dictators, and he still maintained that he had established an influence over Hitler in

spite of all evidence that Hitler was untrustworthy. Even when later events severely overturned his belief, Chamberlain said before his death that he had "never for one single instant" doubted "the rightness" of what he had done at Munich although he had lost all faith in Hitler.[218] Therefore, the conclusion can only be that Chamberlain was cheated not by Hitler, but by himself, by his own self-confidence in dealing with the Dictators and by his own delusion over appeasement. Because of this delusion, he had to believe whatever Hitler said, and turned a deaf ear to the information he did not want to hear.[219] Otherwise, he would lose the basis for his policy. This was the most fundamental reason for not possibly penetrating Hitler's intention, and because of it, Chamberlain and his supporters always made strategic mistakes.

Although appeasement was not a personal policy, Chamberlain should bear the personal responsibility for Munich more than any one else because it was he who, owing to his stubbornness and his faith in the dictators, insisted on compromising to Hitler further and further even beyond what the Cabinet could accept. His hope for peace was at best a delusion, which blinded him to the inevitability of war. Because of this, he was not able to understand the dialectical relationship between peace and war. If he had realised that war was inevitable, and had stood firm even by taking the risk of war, Hitler might have shrunk. The hope of peace would be increased. However, denying the inevitability of war, he ruled out using force to defend peace, which, as a consequence, not only made war inevitable, but also brought it forward.

Apart from all the disastrous effects above, Munich started the process of Russo-German *rapprochement*. Being excluded from the Munich affair, Moscow began to look for German friendship for her own safety. On the other hand, Hitler needed Stalin's cooperation so that he could avoid war on two fronts and obtain Russian raw materials.[220] This cast a shadow on the forthcoming Anglo-Franco-Russian talks, which aimed to build up the last possible deterrence against Hitler's aggression.

1 See Chapter 4, p.160 above.
2 Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich,* London 1961, p.303 & footnote.
3 *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, 3rd-I, N63.
4 *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, D-II, N133.
5 Konrad Henlein began to organise the Sudeten Germans politically in 1933. In the same year his Sudeten German party emerged as the second strongest in parliament. Closely co-operating with Hitler, he continued to impose pressure on the Czech Government for the cession of the Sudeten region to Germany until Munich of 1938.[*The Encyclopedia American International Edition*, Vol. 14, p.92.]
6 DGFP D-II, N221; Shirer, p.364.
7 ibid, Nos. 259, 304. Hitler was told at the end of May that the West Wall could not be held for longer than three weeks. [Robertson, *Hitler's Pre-War Policy and Military Plan 1933-1939*, London 1963, p.131]
8 ibid, p.127; Shirer, p.405.
9 DBFP 3rd-II, Appendix IV, p.683.
10 Shirer, p.407, p.411.
11 Cab 23/92 12(38).
12 DBFP 3rd-I N86 & note 2.
13 Cab 27/623; FP (36) 26th mtg, Mar. 18, 1938.
14 FO 371/22337 R2755/162/12.
15 Dilks, D. (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan 1938-45,* London 1971, pp. 62-63.
16 *House of Commons, Debates* 5th ser. Vol.333, cols.99-100.
17 FO 371/21674 C1866/132/18.
18 ibid.
19 ibid.
20 ibid.
21 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p. 63.
22 FO 371/21674 C1866/132/18.
23 Parker, R.A.C., *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, London 1993, p. 135.
24 FO 371/21674 C1865/132/18.
25 *Cadogan's Diaries*, pp. 62-63.
26 Harvey, J. (ed.), *The Diplomatic Diaries of Oliver Harvey 1937 - 1940*, London 1970, p.119.
27 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.62; Feiling, K., *The Life of Neville Chamberlain*, London 1946, pp.341-342.
28 FO371/21674 C1865/132/18; *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.65; Feiling, pp.347-348.
29 Parker, p.133.
30 Cab 27/623 F.P.(36) 26th meeting.
31 Gibbs, *Grand Strategy* (I) London 1976, pp.642-643; Taylor, *Munich: The Price of Peace*, London 1972, pp.629-633; Cab 23/93 15(38).
32 Hoare confessed in his Memoirs, "It would not be correct to say that our military weakness was the principal cause of the Munich Agreement. The overriding consideration with Chamberlain and his colleagues was that the very complicated problem of Czechoslovakia ought not to lead to a world war, and must at almost any price be settled by peaceful means." [Templewood, *Nine Troubled Years*, London 1954, p.284.]
33 Cab 23/93 15(38).
34 H.C.Debs. 5s. Vol. 333, cols. 1404-1407.
35 ibid, cols. 1413, 1421, 1447.
36 ibid, cols. 1508-1514.
37 DBFP 3rd-I, N139.
38 ibid, N83. Also see Nos.82, 84.
39 ibid, Nos 90, 92.
40 Feiling, p.347; H.C.Debs, 5s. Vol.333, col.1406. Halifax did not think that the Russian note had "great value" either. [DBFP 3rd-I, N109.]
41 FO 371/21674 C1933/132/18; DBFP 3rd-I, Nos 106, 107.

42 ibid, N136.
43 Colvin, I., *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, London 1971, pp.121-122.
44 In the new French Government, Daladier was the Prime Minister, and Bonnet the Foreign Minister.
45 DBFP 3rd-I, N164.
46 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.73.
47 DBFP 3rd-I, N164.
48 ibid, N172.
49 ibid, N171.
50 ibid, N271; Adamthwaite, *The Making of the Second World War*, London 1977, Doc. 51, pp.188-189.
51 DBFP 3rd-I, N488.
52 ibid, N347 note 1.
53 ibid, N347. M. Bonnet told Phipps that he was in general agreement with Halifax' view. [ibid, N347 note 3]
54 ibid, Nos 431, 359 & 391.
55 FO371/21725 C6167/1941/18.
56 ibid.
57 Cab 27/624 FP(36) 31st Mtg. On June 22, Wilson prepared the list of possible names: Runciman, Fisher, Macmillan, Riverdale and Raeburn. [Middlemas, *Diplomacy of Illusion*, London 1972, p. 266 footnote.]
58 DBFP 3rd-I, N493. Lord Runciman was former President of the Board of Trade.
59 DBFP 3rd-II, N546.
60 ibid, N696; *Survey of International Affairs* 1938 (II), p.225.
61 ibid, p.233.
62 ibid, p.248.
63 ibid, p. 253. On September 7, there was a clash between a SdP demonstrator and Czech counter-demonstrator in the Czech town of Moravska Ostrava. When a policemen tried to stop the two disputants, he struck the SdP member slightly by chance. Using this excuse, the SdP leader declared that there was no point in negotiating with the Czech Government, whose subordinate officials deliberately mistreated the Germans. [ibid, p.253, p.257]
64 Gannon, *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*, Oxford 1971, pp.172- 173, 191, 198-199; Admathwaite, "The British Government and the Media 1937-1938", *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 18 (1983), pp.286-287.
65 DGFP D-II, N443 and footnotes, N450; *History of The Times* (II), p.933; Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, London 1948, p.232; Nagle, *A Study of British Public Opinion and the European Appeasement Policy 1933 - 1939*, Librairie Chmielorz 1957, p.134.
66 Dalton, *The Fateful Years*, London 1957, pp.174-175, 195.
67 Churchill, pp.228-230.
68 Avon, *The Reckoning*, London 1965, pp.21-22.
69 Wheeler-Bennett, *Munich: Prologue to Tragedy*, London 1966, p.97.
70 Cab 23/94 Aug. 30, 1938.
71 Cab 23/95 37(38). Halifax also saw Eden, who was completely in accordance with the policy that the Government had adopted. [ibid.]
72 ibid.
73 Cab 23/94 Aug. 30, 1938.
74 Feiling, p.357.
75 DBFP 3rd-II, N862 note 2; Parker, p.154; *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, p.143 footnote; Cab23/95 38(38).
76 ibid; Feiling, p.357; Templewood, p.500.
77 DBFP 3rd-II, N862 note 2.
78 Cab 23/95 38(38).
79 *Cadogan's Dairies*, p.98; DBFP 3rd-II, N862; DGFP D-II N480 note 3.
80 It was suggested at that Cabinet meeting that the given period would be six months.
81 Cab 23/95 38(38); DBFP 3rd-I Nos. 152, 208.
82 Cab 23/95 38(38).

83 DBFP 3rd-II, N873; DGFP D-II, N480.
84 Adamthwaite, "The British Government", *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 18 (1983), p.288; Gannon, pp. 184, 193-194, 209, 216.
85 Cooper, *Old Mean Forget*, London 1954, p.231.
86 Harris, K., *Attlee*, London 1982, p.153.
87 Schmidt, Paul, *Hitler's Interpreter*, London 1951, pp.90-94; Feiling, pp.366-7; DGFP D-II, N487.
88 Feiling, p.367.
89 Cab 27/646 C.S.(38)5; *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.99.
90 Cab 23/95 39(38).
91 Dalton, pp.176-181.
92 DBFP 3rd-II, Nos. 928, 937.
93 ibid, Nos. 978, 986.
94 ibid, Nos. 981, 991.
95 ibid, N996.
96 ibid, Nos. 971, 972.
97 Cab 23/95 40(38); Cab 23/95 41(38).
98 Gannon, pp. 185, 201, 210, 222.
99 Dalton, pp.187-188.
100 Nicolson, N. (ed.) *Harold Nicolson: Diary and Letters 1930-1939*, London 1966, p.364 & note 1.
101 DBFP 3rd-II, N1033; DGFP D-II, N562; Henderson, *Failure Of A Mission*, London 1940, p.156.
102 DBFP 3rd-II, N1038.
103 ibid, N1048.
104 ibid, N1053; DGFP D-II, N573.
105 Henderson, p.156.
106 DBFP 3rd-II, N1057.
107 Henderson, pp.156-7; Schmidt, p.100.
108 ibid, pp.100-101; DBFP 3rd-II, N1073.
109 Henderson, p.157.
110 Bryant, A. (ed.), *In Search of Peace: Speeches (1937-1939) by The Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain*, London, p.296; Cab 23/95 42(38); Schmidt, p.102.
111 Cab27/646 C.S.(38)13; Cab23/95 42(38).
112 Lord Hailsham, the Lord President of the Council, put forward the same view at the meeting of the 25th. He mentioned several examples that Hitler had always given empty promises before he wanted to strike as evidence that Hitler could not be trusted. [Cab23/95 43(38)]
113 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.103; Cab 27/646 C.S.(38)13; Cab23/95 42(38).
114 *Cadogan's Diaries*, pp.103, 105.
115 ibid, p.105.
116 Cab23/95 43(38).
117 *Cadogan's Diaries*, pp.105-106.
118 Amery, *My Political Life: The Unforgiving Years 1929-1940*, London 1950, pp.273-275.
119 Cab 23/95 43(38).
120 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.105.
121 Cab 23/95 43(38).
122 DBFP 3rd-II, N1093
123 The text of the letter, please see ibid, N1097.
124 Cab23/95 44(38); Cab23/95 45(38).
125 DBFP 3rd-II, N1143 note 1.
126 ibid, N1096.
127 ibid, Nos. 1115, 1116, 1118.
128 ibid, N1129.
129 Gannon, pp. 187, 195.

130 Churchill, pp.242-243; Amery, pp.277-278; *Harold Nicolson's Diaries*, pp.366-367. Halifax told Churchill later (July 24, 1947) that Chamberlain was "vexed" at Halifax's approval of this communiqué "with not having submitted it to him before publication."[Adamthwaite, "The British Government", *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol.18 (1983), p.290.]

131 Cab27/646 C.S.(38)15; *Cadogan's Diaries*, pp.107-108.

132 Cooper, pp.238-239.

133 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.107; FO371/21740 C11030/1941/18; DBFP 3rd-II, Nos. 1136, 1138,1140.

134 ibid, N1155.

135 *In Search of Peace*, London, pp.275-276.

136 Cooper, pp.238-239.

137 DBFP 3rd-II, N1144.

138 *In Search of Peace*, p.299.

139 Cab23/95 46(38).

140 George Steward, previously of the News Department of the F. O., member of the Prime Minister's Office, told Dirksen, German Ambassador in London on October 12, 1938 that "During the recent critical days the Prime Minister had actually made decisions entirely alone with his two intimate advisers and in the last decisions had no longer asked the opinion of any member of the Cabinet, not even of Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary. The reason for this was that Chamberlain believed he ought to bear his extremely heavy responsibilities alone. In the end the Prime Minister had not received assistance or support of any kind from the Foreign office, which on the contrary had striven during the last 3 days to sabotage his plans and commit Great Britain to warlike action against Germany. The final outcome was therefore due exclusively to Chamberlain, who had however, thereby ignored the provisions of the British Constitution and customary Cabinet usage." [DGFP D-IV, N251.] Also see Churchill, p.247; Amery, p.280.

141 DBFP 3rd-II, N1158

142 ibid, N1159

143 ibid, N1161

144 ibid, N1163. The Czech Government was also informed and forced to accept the British plan and the time-table for ceding the Sudetenland. [ibid, Nos.1188, 1196]

145 Wheeler-Bennett, p.167.

146 *Harold Nicolson's Diaries*, pp.370-371; Amery, p. 280 note 1; Thompson, *The Anti-Appeasers*, Oxford 1971, p.181.

147 Gannon, pp. 187-188, 196, 202-204, 211, 218, 222, 225.

148 Thompson, p.181.

149 *Harold Nicolson's Diaries*, pp.371-372.

150 DBFP 3nd-II, Nos.1224, 1227.

151 Feiling, pp.376-377; DBFP 3rd-II, N1228.

152 ibid, N1229.

153 As for the popular enthusiasm of the moment, Chamberlain said to Halifax, "All this will be over in three months." [Halifax, *Fulness of Days*, London 1957, p.199.]

154 *In Search of Peace*, pp.302-303.

155 Some of these letters can be seen in *Life of Neville Chamberlain* by Feiling, pp.378-381.

156 Madge & Harrison, *Britain by Mass Observation*, London 1939, p.106.

157 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.203.

158 H.C.Debs. 5s. Vol. 345, col. 460.

159 H.C.Debs. 5s. Vol. 339, cols.51, 66.

160 ibid, col. 52.

161 ibid, cols. 136-140.

162 ibid, cols. 365, 373.

163 *Harold Nicolson's Diaries*, p.375.

164 Feiling, pp.375, 381.

165 Cab23/95 48(38). Halifax wrote to Phipps on November 1, "the greatest lesson of the crisis has been the unwisdom of basing a foreign policy on insufficient armed strength." [DBFP 3rd-III, N285]

166 Cab23/95 48(38).

167 Cab23/96 Cabinet minutes, October 31, 1938.

168 Cab 23/93 15(38).

169 Jones, T., *A Diaries with Letters 1931-1950*, London 1954, p.418.

170 Cab 27/623 F.P.(36) 27th meeting.

171 Gibbs, pp.289-290.

172 Cooper, pp. 215, 220; Cab 23/93 15(38).

173 Bond, Brian (ed.), *Chief of Staff: The Diaries of Lt-General Sir Henry Pownall, Volume One 1933 - 1940*, London 1972, p.140.

174 Gibbs, p.302.

175 Peden, G.C., *British Rearmament and the Treasury 1932-1939*, Edinburgh 1979, p.8.

176 Klein, B. H., *Germany's Economic Preparations for War*, London 1959, p.18.

177 Peden, p.205, Appendix III; Klein, p.16. Exchange rate against RM was approximately £1=RM12, which is calculated from Churchill's estimation. He estimated that German expenditure on rearmament (1933-35) was RM24 billion, or roughly £2 billion. [Churchill, p.177.]

178 Peden, p.8.

179 Adamthwaite, *The Making*, Appendix p.227.

180 Churchill estimated on November 29, 1935 that the German Air Force was at least as strong as Britain's. By end of 1936, it would be 50% stronger than the RAF. However, Baldwin disagreed with his estimate and pointed out that Germany's "real strength is not 50 per cent of our strength in Europe today." With present rates of expansion maintained on both sides, then a year hence the British margin of superiority would still be 50%. The truth is that the Government knew at that time that by November 1936, Germany would have a margin of superiority of 100-200 firstline aircraft. [Gibbs, pp.138-140]

181 ibid, p.584.

182 ibid, pp.584, 587-588.

183 ibid, p.599.

184 DBFP 3rd-II, N1224.

185 C.H. Debs. 5s. Vol.339, col.303.

186 *Survey* 1938 (III), p.41.

187 DGFP D-IV, N81.

188 *Documents on International Affairs 1939-1946* (I), p.40.

189 *Survey* 1938 (III), pp.66-67, 111-112; DBFP 3rd-IV, N91; DGFP D-IV, Nos. 91, 167.

190 DBFP 3rd-IV, N118.

191 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, pp.237-238.

192 Harris, p.159; Amery, p.307; Churchill, pp.267-268.

193 *Survey* 1938 (III), pp.266-269; DGFP D-IV, N229.

194 DBFP 3rd-IV, N256.

195 Cab23/98 11(39)

196 Gannon, pp.235-237, 239-240, 256-257.

197 *Harold Nicolson's Diaries*, p.392; Thompson, p.203. Since Munich there had been a lot of talks about forming a National Government, including the appointment of Churchill, Eden, Duff Cooper and some Labour leaders if they wanted to co-operate. Halifax gave Chamberlain a similar suggestion. [*Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, pp. 212, 213, 215; Halifax, p.200.] Amery discussed with Attlee on October 21, 1938 the possibility of Labour cooperation with the National Government. [Amery, pp.298-299] However, Chamberlain turned a deaf ear to all the suggestion. [Also see Chapter 6, p.252.]

198 H.C.Debs. 5s. Vol. 345, cols. 449-457.

199 ibid, cols. 458-462.

200 *Documents on International Affairs 1939-1946* (I), pp.60, 62.

201 *Cadogan's Diary*, p.157.

202 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939*, London 1939, pp.150-151; Thorne, *The Approach of War 1938-39*, London 1968, p.87.

203 Taylor, *Origins of the Second World War*, London 1972, pp. 184, 189; Gilbert, *The Roots of Appeasement*, London 1966, p.186; Feiling, p.400.

204 Henderson, p.168.

205 DGFP D-I, N19.

206 Adamthwaite, *The Making*, Doc.62, p.199.

207 Churchill, p.250.

208 See p. 198 above.

209 DBFP 3rd-VII, N314; Adamthwaite, *the Making*, pp.73-74, 81.

210 *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, p.168; Feiling, pp.359, 382.

211 See pp.235-236 above.

212 Halifax, p.196. Also see Henderson, pp.147-148.

213 See pp. 202-204 above.

214 Feiling, pp.378-381.

215 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.203; Middlemas, pp.414-415.

216 Feiling, p.359.

217 Halifax, p.199.

218 Avon, Earl of., *Facing the Dictators*, London 1962, p.559; Feiling, pp.341, 456; Cab 23/95 43(38).

219 For example, both Van. and Cadogan wrote reports on the subject of the German oppositions. But they did not seem to obtain any attention from Chamberlain and Halifax. [See *Vansittart in Office*, p.309]

220 DBFP 3rd-VII, N314; Adamthwaite, *the Making*, pp.89-90.

Chapter 6 THE LAST FUTILE EFFORT

I. GUARANTEE TO POLAND

Until early March 1939, the British policy-makers had spread the illusion that a European settlement was coming.[1] Hitler's sudden *coup* against Prague on March 15 shook the Prime Minister's authority because the event had proved that his policy was wrong.[2] Harold Nicolson, the National Labour Member for West Leicester, described the debates in the House on the 17th,

> the feeling in the lobbies is that Chamberlain will either have to go or completely reverse his policy. Unless in his speech tonight he admits that he was wrong, they feel that resignation is the only alternative. All the tadpoles are beginning to swim into the other camp ... The Opposition refuse absolutely to serve under him. The idea is that Halifax should become Prime Minister and Eden Leader of the House.[3]

The Press such as *The Manchester Guardian* held the view that if they changed the policy the Government would absorb some dissenters, for example, Churchill, Eden, and Duff Cooper into Cabinet. This was, in the public eye, a test of whether the appeasement had been abandoned.[4] After Munich, Halifax also gave Chamberlain a similar suggestion including the appointment of some Labour leaders. Being reluctant to enlarge the Government, the Prime Minister turned a deaf ear to all this. He believed, in Harvey's words, that he could best handle any situation "with the existing Cabinet".[5] He particularly disliked the idea of including Churchill in Cabinet because as he said,

> The nearer we get to war, the more his chances improve, and *vice versa*. If there is any possibility of easing the tension and getting back to normal relations with the dictators, I wouldn't risk it by what would certainly be regarded by them as a challenge.[6]

In fact, faced with the German violation of the Munich Agreement, the British policy-makers felt lost. When the Prime Minister discussed the situation with Halifax, Cadogan and other Ministers, they found that owing to the imperfect information and the time limit they could hardly "give the matter proper consideration, or to decide how far the situation had changed." Nor could the Chiefs of Staff offer their advice on the whole question because "the question involved so many considerations", and they had to wait until "the main lines of our

policy had been determined." Cadogan wrote in his diaries, we "don't know where we are. We ought perhaps to take a stand (whatever that may mean) ... can we?"[7] In the end, the Prague *coup* forced them to open their eyes to Hitler's real ambition. The Prime Minister almost made a confession at the Cabinet meeting that he had been wrong:

> up till a week ago we had proceeded on the assumption that we should be able to continue with our policy of getting on to better terms with the Dictator Powers, and that although those powers had aims, those aims were limited. We had all along had at the back of our minds the reservation that this might not prove to be the case but we had felt that it was right to try out the possibilities of this course.
>
> He had now come definitely to the conclusion that Herr Hitler's attitude made it impossible to continue to negotiate on the old basis with the Nazi regime. This did not mean that negotiations with the German people were impossible. No reliance could be placed on any of the assurances given by the Nazi leaders.[8]

Based on the above idea which was supported by his colleagues he gave an address at Birmingham on March 17, in which he justified his Munich policy on one hand, and to make a gesture that Britain would face the German challenge on the other:

> Germany, under her present regime, has sprung a series of unpleasant surprises upon the world. ... they must cause us all to be asking ourselves: 'Is this the end of an old adventure, or is it the beginning of a new? Is this the last attack upon a small State, or is it to be followed by others? Is this, in fact, a step in the direction of an attempt to dominate the world by force?' ... with the lessons of history for all to read, it seems incredible that we should see such a challenge.

However, he emphasised that he was not prepared to engage Britain by "new unspecified commitments".[9]

That day, Tilea, the Roumanian Minister in London, asked to see Halifax urgently. In the interview Tilea informed him that his Government had received German demands of a monopoly of their exports and to accept measures of industrial restriction inside Roumania in German interests, which was, in his opinion, "in nature of ultimatum".[10] In addition, according to the information from France the next German victim could also be Poland, Memel or Hungary.[11]

On the weekend of the 18th, the Prime Minister summoned the Cabinet meeting to discuss the Roumanian emergency. He gave an account of his idea of changing policy, which has been mentioned above and said that since Germany intended to obtain domination over the whole of South Eastern Europe, "we had no alternative but to take up the challenge." "On this basis," he continued, "our next course was to ascertain what friends we had who would join with us in resisting aggression." He asked the Cabinet whether they agreed generally with the change of policy.

Halifax said that if Germany committed aggression against Roumania, "it would be very difficult for this country not to take all the action in her power to rally resistance against that aggression". Lord Chatfield, Secretary of Defence, told the Ministers that the Chiefs of Staff could only offer some preliminary observations before the general policy had been decided. Their diagnosis was

> if Germany could dominate Roumania economically, political domination of that country would almost certainly follow. This would have even more serious consequences, since there would be nothing to prevent Germany from marching straight through to the Mediterranean...

They did not think there was anything they could do to save Roumania from German domination and the situation was "very similar to that which had faced us in September in regard to Czechoslovakia." They suggested,

> If, however, the support of Poland and Russia could be secured the position would be entirely changed. ... If Poland and Russia would be prepared to help us, we should join with them in resisting German aggression.

Lord Stanhope, the new Admiralty Minister, also emphasised that "provided we could ensure Germany having to face war on two fronts, there was much less likelihood of war and we should be more likely to win if war came about."

After discussion, the change of policy proposed by the Prime Minister was agreed by all the Ministers present. Chamberlain concluded that

> the real point at issue was whether we could obtain sufficient assurances from other countries to justify us in a public pronouncement that we should resist any further act of aggression on the part of Germany. ...Poland was very likely the key to the situation, ... our communication to Poland should probably be to go somewhat further than our communications to other countries.

The Cabinet then decided to make approaches to Russia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Greece and Roumania about joint assistance against further German aggression.[12]

Next day, a ministerial meeting was held to examine the Cabinet conclusion with the attendance of Chamberlain, Halifax, Simon, Stanley, Cadogan and Wilson. The Ministers came to a unanimous agreement that, "while it was important that some action should be taken quickly, if we attempted too much, we might end by achieving no positive result for a long time." The Prime Minister wanted "to gain time", for he could "never accept the view that war is inevitable." He realised that "it was impossible to deal with Hitler after he had thrown all his own assurances to the winds." They agreed and concluded that "a pronouncement of this character would by itself have a steadying effect" to deter German further aggression.[13]

Now by setting a deterrent, Chamberlain intended to "gain time". But for what? For preparation for war against Hitler or for a new chance of searching for a settlement with him? With the time he gained, he hoped that Britain would be in a stronger position due to the following factors: improvement of British rearmament, new guarantees to small states, Mussolini's help in the direction of peace, and a more fantastic possibility that Hitler might die or be overthrown by his opposing generals. With the stronger position, he believed that he could convince Germany, as he wrote on July 30, 1939,

> that the chances of winning a war without getting thoroughly exhausted in the process are too remote to make it worth while. But the corollary to that must be that she has a chance of getting fair and reasonable consideration and treatment from us and others, if she will give up the idea that she can force it from us, and convince us that she has given it up.

In other words, with the time he gained by setting a deterrent, he could, rather than actually fight war, convince Hitler that if he continued abuse of force, he would be resisted, but if he raised his demand by peaceful means, he could still get the best offer. In order to meet this aim, Britain needed to increase her rearmament to a certain level, which was sufficient to defend her own safety and to warn Germany, but not necessary to fight a real war. From 1938 to 1939, although defence expenditure, compared to that of previous years, had considerably increased, the total cost amounted to no more than seven per cent of the national income.

However, German armament spending during the same period was nearly five times as much as Britain's.[14] The Treasury, in close consultation with Chamberlain, worked consistently to limit the defence budget until the outbreak of war.[15] All of this demonstrated that the deterrent was designed for a new settlement instead of war. Feiling remarks, in commenting on Chamberlain's effort, "if then his weapons had changed, his purpose had not."[16] The evidence came immediately.

On March 20, Chamberlain sent a letter to Mussolini, asking the Duce to use his influence on Hitler towards the direction of peace. Cadogan thought that it "looked much too much like asking for another Munich." However, even another Munich would not relax Chamberlain as he explained later (in mid-July),

> That is not good enough. This is just what we tried at Munich, but Hitler broke it up when it suited him. I doubted if any solution, short of war, is practicable at present...

But he believed the moment for settlement would come again as he continued:

> if dictators would have a modicum of patience, I can imagine that a way could be found of meeting German claims while safeguarding Poland's independence and economic security.[17]

On the same day (March 20), when the Cabinet members discussed the draft of the Four Power (Britain, France, Russia and Poland) Declaration, Chamberlain made it clear that this Declaration "aimed at avoiding specific commitments":

> Although, therefore, the pronouncement did not involve us in any actual new commitment, public opinion would certainly attach significance to such a declaration signed by the Four Powers...
>
> the declaration did not constitute a guarantee of the existing frontiers and of the indefinite maintenance of the *status quo*. The declaration was concerned with a far wider issue, namely, security and political independence of European States against German domination.[18]

This policy, as Oliver Harvey, the Private Secretary to the Foreign Secretary, remarked, was "no more than reaffirmation of our existing League of Nations obligation to consult together". The Government was "still doubtful how far we will commit ourselves to *action*."[19]

After the meeting, Cadogan got the draft into shape and with Chamberlain's approval the telegrams were sent to the countries concerned.[20] During the next few days, information from France showed that the French Government accepted the

Declaration, and Russia, in spite of some reservations, also accepted on the condition that both France and Poland would act accordingly.[21] However, Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, was reluctant to agree with such a Declaration on the grounds that it would " place Poland in the Soviet camp", which would cause German unprovoked invasion. On the other hand, he implied that Poland might associate with England and France if Russia were omitted. A secret agreement could be signed between Britain and Poland.[22]

On March 25 and 26, the F.O. held departmental meetings to discuss the next step with attendance of Halifax, Cadogan, Van., Sargent, Strang and Butler (Parliamentary Under-Secretary). Cadogan, for the first time, confessed that the situation was "murky" as "Van predicted & as I never believed it would." He thought "we must try to build a dam" to stem German expansion although he realised that "chances of that are rather slight." The Foreign Secretary had a view that the "adherence of Poland is essential", and "we cannot have Russia in the forefront picture." They intended to approach a sort of guarantee to Poland and Roumania, which Chamberlain agreed with in principle.[23] Being full of misgivings over Russia, the Prime Minister did not want to associate with that country either as he wrote on the 26th:

> I must confess to the most profound distrust of Russia. I have no belief whatever in her ability to maintain an effective offensive, even if she wanted to. And I distrust her motives, which seem to me to have little connection with our ideas of liberty, and to be concerned only with getting every one else by the ears. Moreover, she is both hated and suspected by many of the smaller States, notably by Poland, Roumania, and Finland.[24]

Owing to this prejudice, he told his colleagues at the FPC meeting next day that he would like to choose Poland rather than Russia as an ally on the East front because Poland was unwilling to associate with Russia publicly. In his opinion, the dilemma was that a front against German aggression was likely to be frustrated if Russia was closely associated, but a failure to associate with the Soviets would give rise to suspicion and difficulty with the Left at home. He suggested that they had to abandon the policy of the Four Power Declaration, and an alternative course was that if Poland or Roumania were attacked and they were prepared to resist, Britain and France would support them. Moreover, it should be ascertained that Poland

would come to their aid if Britain, France and Roumania were involved in war with Germany. He said,

> this plan left Soviet Russia out of the picture ... It would seem imprudent to attempt to bring Russia into the plan publicly. ... The Franco-Soviet Pact might possibly offer the means by which Russia might be indirectly and secretly brought into the scheme.

The Foreign Secretary was completely in accordance with the Prime Minister in pointing out that "if we had to make a choice between Poland and Soviet Russia, it seemed clear that Poland would give the greater value." He quoted from the report by the British Embassy in Moscow[25] to prove that the Russian Army was greatly weakened by recent purges, its offensive value was small and their planes were out of date.

However, Hoare and Oliver Stanley (the President of the Board of Trade) thought that Russia constituted the greatest deterrent in the East against German aggression. The exclusion of Russia was bound to have serious consequences. With a similar idea, Chatfield warned the Cabinet of the danger that "the worst that could happen would be for us to get involved in war without any allies on the Eastern Front." Therefore, he advised that

> it should be our objective to endeavour to obtain the maximum possible of support in Eastern Europe. ... Poland was, from the military point of view, probably the best of potential eastern allies, but ... Soviet Russia would act as a greater deterrent so far as Germany was concerned.

On the other hand, he was afraid that they should not get drawn into any commitments with Russia which might involve them in hostilities with Japan.

At the end, the Cabinet agreed the alternative course proposed by the Prime Minister. Halifax and Simon settled the final form of telegrams to Warsaw and Bucharest. As to the issue of association with Russia, the Prime Minister said that it would depend on the reply from Poland.[26]

The Cabinet had not made up their minds yet about a guarantee to Poland until the 28th.[27] However, this issue was urgently put on the agenda due to the two pieces of information received on the following day. The first one was that the American Ambassador had informed the F.O. that his colleague in Warsaw had information of a possible German intention to execute a *coup* against Poland. The second one was that Ian Colvin, the Correspondent of the *News Chronicle* in Berlin,

reported to Simon, Halifax, Cadogan and Chamberlain in person that he had received information from various contacts in Germany, which indicated that Poland was Hitler's next victim and an attack to her could be made very quickly, perhaps around the end of March.[28] Although Cadogan was not "entirely convinced", it left deep impression on Chamberlain and Halifax, the latter of whom thought that "these sources of information had been pretty accurate in the previous autumn, when we had not always been prepared to rely upon them." Both of them agreed to give an immediate declaration of support of Poland even without waiting for Beck's reply.[29]

At an emergency meeting of the 30th, reporting the information above to the Cabinet, Halifax pointed out that Hitler might strike before Britain had made arrangements. He suggested that "we should consider whether we could take some prior action as to forestall Herr Hitler's next step", namely, to "make a clear declaration of our intention to support Poland if Poland was attacked by Germany." This proposal included two objectives: firstly, it might cause Hitler's plan to be suspended and would thus react to his discredit within the German Army; secondly, it would "educate" German public opinion that Hitler's ambition would result in Germany becoming engaged in war on two fronts.[30]

The Prime Minister supplemented that they should learn from the lesson of Czechoslovakia that

> instead of the Czech army being on our side, Czech resources were now available to Germany. It would be a very serious matter if Poland, instead of being a potential ally, also became added to the resources of Germany. If, therefore, we took no action, there was a risk that, in a short time, we should find that Poland had been over-run and that we had missed an opportunity. On the other hand, if we uttered a warning such as was now proposed, we should be committed to intervention if Germany persisted in aggression.

As a serious step of "the actual crossing of the stream", this proposal indicated a new commitment under certain circumstances. But the Prime Minister strictly limited the responsibility that "would not bring us up against a tremendous decision on some point which did not affect the independence of Poland."

In the course of discussion, Lord Maugham, the Lord Chancellor, emphasised that "we must support Poland if her independence was threatened" on one hand, and " we should not encourage Poland to go to war with Germany about Danzig" on the

other. Chatfield passed on the view of the Chiefs of Staff that if Germany were to attack Poland, "we should declare war on Germany." In the end, the Cabinet agreed that the Prime Minister would declare in House on the 31st on the following line that if

> any action was taken which clearly threatened the independence of Poland so that Poland felt bound to resist with her national forces, His Majesty's Government would at once lend them all the support in their power.[31]

Within two weeks, Britain also gave a similar guarantee to Greece and Roumania.[32]

The guarantee to Poland, like the proposal of Four Power declaration, was not aimed towards war as Chamberlain explained in the period when the guarantee was given, "I am no more a man of war to-day than I was in September"; "I trust that our actions, begun but not concluded, will prove to be the turning-point not towards war, which winds nothing, cures nothing, ends nothing, but towards a more wholesome era, when reason will take the place of force."[33]

II. THE ANGLO-FRANCO-SOVIET CONVERSATIONS

1. The Reluctant Decision on An Alliance with Russia: April - May

The exclusion of Russia from the alliance raised a great uneasiness from the Opposition. A day before the Declaration of the Guarantee to Poland, three Labour leaders: Mr Greenwood, Dr Dalton and Mr Alexander saw the Prime Minister, showing their "strong objections to any action being taken which would imply that Russia was being left on one side". They were critical that "the Government were prejudiced against Russia and were neglecting a possible source of help."[34] Churchill and Eden also pushed the Government in the direction of allying itself with Russia on the need to build up a "Peace Front", Churchill warning in the House on May 19:

> none of these States in Eastern Europe can maintain themselves for, say, a year's war unless they have behind them the massive, solid backing of a friendly Russia, ... Without any effective Eastern front, there can be no satisfactory defence of our interests in the West, and without Russia there can be no effective Eastern front.[35]

Under such a pressure, Chamberlain, hiding his own dislike of Russia, explained to the Opposition that the Government were not "cold-shouldering Russia -- it was the misgiving of Poland and Others."[36] In the end, the position of Russia in the

"Peace Front" was an issue which could not be got around. On April 10, the F.O. received the report from Kennard, H.M.G Ambassador in Warsaw, which was based on the memo by his Military Attaché about the main military considerations in Poland. After analysing Polish weakness from a military aspect, the local production of armaments and the raw material supplies, the report concluded:

> It seems therefore unlikely that Poland can hope to defend the Corridor or her western frontier, but that she might be compelled eventually to fall back on the Vistula. ... The importance for Poland of a friendly Russia is thus of paramount importance.[37]

Meanwhile, Seeds, the British Ambassador in Moscow, warned the Government that he could not see how Russia was able to contribute her military assistance effectively towards Poland and Roumania if these two countries refused to consider co-operation with Russia. He urged the Government to find some way "to prevail on Poland and Roumania to accept the idea of some form of Soviet military assistance." His French colleague in Moscow was "in complete agreement" with him.[38]

In mid-April, the subject was discussed both in Cabinet and in the F.O. In spite of distrust of Russia, Halifax was "reluctant" to abandon his efforts to obtain some sort of assistance from Russia.[39] He tried to "find a way round Russian difficulty" by proposing to the Russian Government that they should make a unilateral declaration to support any particular State against aggression, if she desired. He told the Cabinet on the 13th that "he found it difficult to see on what grounds Russia could refuse to make a statement on these lines."[40]

Next day when he discussed this new approach with Cadogan and other F.O. staff such as Oliphant, Maurice Ingram and Strang, he did "not wish to proceed, at present, with his suggestion that we should invite the Polish and Roumanian Govts to give favourable considerations to any unilateral declaration that Russia might make in favourable of Poland and Roumania." Cadogan thought that this proposal was made "in order to placate our left wing in England, rather than to obtain any solid military advantage". Then they worked on the draft telegram that was sent to Seeds late at night.[41] At the same time, they informed the French Government of the British proposal. In the reply, the French said that they would work on the same lines.[42]

When Seeds had interviews with Litvinov, the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, the latter said that, on considering the British proposal, his Government "wanted to know how far Great Britain and other countries were prepared to go." He asked, "how do we know that Great Britain will declare war in the event of armed aggression? Will she only lodge a protest or not even that?" Besides this, he would also like to know the attitude of Poland and Roumania.[43] A few days later (on the 18th), Litvinov handed Seeds the Soviet reply. Regarding the British proposal acceptable in principle, the Soviet offered their counter-move that emphasised reciprocity, namely, Britain, France and Russia should make an agreement for mutual assistance; offer all help to states lying between the Baltic and Black Seas and bordering on Russia; discuss promptly the means of giving such help; sign conventions on the military and political aspects simultaneously; and agree not to conclude a separate peace.[44]

As soon as they received the Soviet proposal on the same day, Cadogan had a discussion with Halifax, and then he wrote a memo for the use of Mr Butler and himself in the FPC the next day. In his memo, Cadogan weighed "the advantage of a paper commitment by Russia ... against the disadvantage of associating ourselves openly with Russia." Based on the information available, he believed that Russia was unlikely, even if she wanted, to give effective assistance outside her borders. Therefore in his opinion the disadvantage was out-weighed on the grounds that the association with Russia would lose much sympathy from Poland, Roumania, Portugal, Spain and Yugoslavia. On the other hand, he realised that "there is great difficulty in refusing the Soviet offer" because "the Left in this country may be counted on to make the most of this." Moreover, he feared that "if we turn down this proposal, the Soviet might make some 'non-intervention' agreement with the German Government." Despite this, he concluded,

> it seems, on balance, better to refuse an offer that may alienate our friends and reinforce the propaganda of our enemies without bringing in exchange any real material contribution to the strength of our Front.[45]

His memo was much in line with Chamberlain and was agreed by the FPC on the 19th.[46] At that meeting, Chatfield again mentioned the Report of the Chiefs of Staff on March 18:

> If the U.S.S.R were on our side and Poland neutral, the position would alter in our favour. It should however be noted that the USSR has today militarily an uncertain quality. ... They do not think that she would take any military action outside her borders but she would strongly resist a direct invasion of her territory, ... With Russia as an ally Germany's position in the Baltic would be difficult and it would be possible to exercise considerable interference with that part of her iron ore supplies from Sweden...

He agreed with the British Embassy in Moscow, who had estimated Russia's military quality as being uncertain.

In the course of the discussion, Hoare expressed:

> Poland would be able to offer little military resistance to a German invasion, ... it seemed as if Russia was the only possible source of munitions for Poland and the other countries of Eastern Europe.

He suggested that the Chiefs of Staff should be required to produce another report on the military value of Russian assistance. Inskip, Dominion Secretary, put forward the similar view that as a large power, Russia, if she meant business, "would be of some considerable military value." The Prime Minister, however, summed up that all the information suggested that Russia was of "little military value for offensive purpose." He did not agree that due to the need for munitions of smaller Eastern European states it was necessary to sign a definite military alliance between Britain, France and Russia. Not only did an alliance with Russia raise difficulty in Poland, but it might be also an unnecessary provocation to offer to Germany, which ought to be avoided. With this strong current of appeasement at the back of his mind, he suggested that in "not turning down the Russian proposal we should endeavour to convey the impression that the time for a military alliance was not yet ripe." In conclusion, the FPC approved Chamberlain's lines and instructed the Chiefs of Staff to submit an appreciation of Russia's military strength.[47]

In the next few days, the British and French Governments communicated with each other about their replies to the Soviet proposal. Cadogan saw the French Ambassador and required that France should hold on their reply until they had consulted the British Government. Halifax asked Phipps on the 21st to transfer to the French the draft of the British reply, which turned down the Soviet proposal on the grounds that "it takes too little account of practical difficulties," particularly that Poland would object to a tripartite agreement providing for Soviet assistance to her

whether or not she wanted it. The British Government, therefore, insisted on their own original proposal of April 14, namely, the suggestion of Russian unilateral declaration.[48] The French reaction was somewhat confusing to the British policy-makers, because it "entirely" agreed with the British criticism against the Soviet proposal on one hand, and supported a tripartite agreement on the other.[49]

Meanwhile, the Chiefs of Staff worked on the report under the guideline of the FPC, which had simply asked them to estimate the Soviet military value without discussing the question of a guarantee since political arguments against an alliance with Russia had already outweighed possible military advantages in ministers' eyes.[50] Their conclusion showed, as Chatfield passed on to the FPC and Cabinet: Russia could actively assist France and Britain in war, which would, apart from giving military aid to their allies on the Eastern Front, be by naval action in the Baltic. In theory, she could involve 130 divisions, but in practice, she could only mobilise about 30 divisions. The Chiefs of Staff therefore advised:

> the military assistance which Russia could bring to bear was not nearly as great as certain quarters represented it to be....
>
> We should not act in such a way as to forgo the chance of Russian help in war: we should not jeopardise the common front with Poland, and we should not jeopardise the cause of peace.

This certainly met the Ministers' desire and strengthened their arguments against an alliance with Russia.

When they considered the French proposal along with the British reply to Russia at the meetings on the 25th and 26th, neither Chamberlain nor Halifax liked the French idea. The Foreign Secretary remarked that it "would certainly involve very great discouragement of all our potential friends," because "a tripartite Agreement must involve at least indirect Soviet assistance to Poland." The French proposal "was therefore open to the objection which they had themselves argued." Chamberlain agreed that the French proposal was unacceptable, and emphasised that the British proposals had been that Russia "should limit its assistance to those countries which desired it, and that the desired assistance should be given in such manner as would be found most convenient." Halifax concluded that the time was not ripe for a tripartite agreement and they proposed to ask the Soviet Government to give further consideration to the British proposal of April 14. "It was most

needed and did not ask the Soviet Government to do more than to come in when we were already involved." Although he realised that this policy "would be violently attacked", he thought that with the latest Report of Chiefs of Staff they had "a good case to defend."[51]

Two days later, he informed the French Government that their proposal would "raise serious difficulty", and asked them to support the British line. On May 3, France agreed to the British proposal without much enthusiasm.[52]

In the meantime, he had discussions with Churchill, who "was entirely in favour of the proposed tri-partite pact." But Halifax told his colleague that he worried that a tripartite pact "would make war inevitable." On the other hand, he was also disturbed by the danger that "a refusal of Russia's offer might even throw her into Germany's arms."[53]

On the 5th, the FPC considered the final draft of reply to the Soviet proposal. The Foreign Secretary repeated his warning to the Ministers that "it was most important that the negotiation should not be broken off at this juncture." However, he insisted on the foregoing lines on the grounds that

> If to the somewhat loose and indefinite unilateral declaration we joined a firm and definite "no separate peace" tripartite agreement we should be changing the whole basis of our policy and risking the alienation of our friends. ... If war was certain he would not care who helped him: but if there were a 5 per cent chance of peace, he did not wish to jeopardise it by associating with a country in whom he had no confidence.

Chamberlain agreed with Halifax and suggested that before submitting the reply to the Soviet Government, Seeds should be asked to make sure whether Soviet foreign policy had changed due to the replacement of Litvinov by Molotov.[54]

On the 9th, Seeds obtained assurance from Molotov, the new Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs that the Soviet policy was unchanged and the Soviet proposal "still held good" while the Ambassador handed over the British proposal.[55]

In this period, the F.O. received some information of a German-Russian rapprochement.[56] Halifax "found it difficult to attach much credence" to these reports. He judged that it "might be spread by persons who desired to drive us into making a pact with Russia." Although he realised that the time might soon come for Staff talks with Russia, "he would prefer to postpone this as long as possible."

At the same time, Chatfield asked the Chiefs of Staff to report on the balance of strategic value to Britain in war of having Spain as an enemy or Russia as an ally. The military experts gave their observations as following:

> The active enmity of Spain would greatly weaken our position in the Western Mediterranean and would threaten our Atlantic communications. On the other hand, Spain was suffering from war-weariness, and a blockade of her coasts would, in the long run, bring her to a stand-still.
>
> If Russia were an active and whole-hearted ally, she would be of great assistance, particularly in containing substantial enemy forces and in supplying war material to our other allies in Eastern Europe. But, on the assumption that if Russia was not with us, she was at least neutral, ... the advantages of an alliance with Russia would not offset the disadvantages of the open hostility of Spain. On the other hand, the greatest danger we had to face would be a combination of Russia and the Axis Powers.[57]

The Soviet reply arrived within a week (on May 15). The Soviet Government concluded that the British proposal "cannot serve as a basis" for negotiations on the grounds that it lacked reciprocity. They required that Britain and France should join Russia in guaranteeing the Baltic States -- Finland, Estonia and Latvia as Russia joined them in guaranteeing Poland and Roumania.[58]

Before the Soviet proposal was considered by the FPC, the F.O. prepared a new draft agreement which suggested future or immediate military consultations with Russia. On the morning of the 16th, Sargent, authorised by Halifax, asked Minister of Defence about the view of the Chiefs of Staff on the new draft. This consultation give the military experts a chance to make a comprehensive observation on the situation. They were now moving over to the view that Soviet aid would be more effective than they had previously thought.[59] At the FPC meeting of the same day, Chatfield told Ministers the new observations of military experts:

> We should enter into an agreement with Russia on a reciprocal basis for mutual support. ... Great Britain could be attached in many ways directly or indirectly, but apart from Poland and Roumania, Soviet Russia could only be attacked on the Baltic. ... Such an attack would be most difficult to undertake with any hope of success. ... In these circumstances we had much to gain and very little to lose...

The Chiefs of Staff warned,

> Failure to reach agreement with Russia might result in Russia standing aside in a future European war and hoping thereby to secure advantages from the exhaustion of the Western Powers.

They emphasised that Russia should not, in any circumstances become allied with Germany. Chatfield drew attention to "the weak strategical position of Poland" and "the unlikelihood of Poland being able to put up any serious resistance to a German invasion".

However, neither Chamberlain nor Halifax admired the view of military experts this time. The Prime Minister doubted whether their conclusion was based on an assumption that "we were unlikely to get any agreement with Russia unless the agreement took the form of full pact such as Russia was demanding." He criticised that their "advice differed from the advice previously given." Nor did the Foreign Secretary believe that Russia could give much help to the Western Powers. Moreover, he felt an alliance with Russia would offend Poland and Roumania. In this case, "while the military arguments for a pact were sound the political arguments against a pact were more formidable." In addition, he did not want to fight for Russia over the Baltic States by arguing that these States did not want Russian assistance.

Nevertheless, many Ministers such as Chatfield, Hoare, Stanley and Cadogan fully realised the importance of an alliance with Russia and insisted on going further to meet her demands.[60] In spite of this strong opposite view, the Prime Minister still "wished to limit our commitments to attacks through Poland and Roumania ... rather than consent to a triple alliance to include Russia." He, however, agreed to give a further consideration to the issue.[61] Halifax held the same ground. Based on the record of conversation between Van. and Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador, on May 16, he suggested that Van. should have another talk with Maisky on the lines as follows: a) the British Government objected to including the four Baltic States within the scope of arrangement, but b) they undertook to institute staff talks.[62]

According to these lines, the F.O. drew up a formula on the 17th for Van.'s use in his further talk with Maisky on the same day. At that meeting, the Soviet Ambassador's reaction was "not too unfriendly" and he promised to submit this formula to Moscow at once.[63] However, two days later Maisky informed Halifax that the new formula was not acceptable to his Government on the grounds that the

only basis on which Russia were prepared to proceed was that of a triple pact between three Powers.[64]

On the same day (the 19th), Halifax give the FPC account of the Van.-Maisky conversation and informed them of the Russian refusal of the new formula. Obviously it was high time that they chose between alliance with Russia and a breakdown of negotiations. The FPC were now divided into two sides: those for alliance included Hoare, Stanley, M. MacDonald, Inskip, Chatfield and Burgin (Minister of Supply) while those against were Chamberlain, Halifax, Simon, Morrison (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster). The Prime Minister even said that he "will resign rather than sign alliance with Soviet."[65] Despite distrusting Russia, Halifax was more moderate than Chamberlain and took the view that "we had gone so far that the little more would not make much difference in its effect on Hitler." Like him, Cadogan wrote, "My opinion (much against my will) is hardening in favour of former."[66]

In the F.O. Malkin (Legal Adviser) tried to draft a formula closer to Russian demands "without being an alliance" but it was not very successful.[67] Communicating with Halifax, Cadogan started to prepare a memo on May 20 for the FPC to weigh up again "the pros & cons" of proposed Anglo-Soviet Pact.[68] This time, he knew better about the importance of Russia than he had in April:

> there is no alternative between agreeing to a three-Power pact ... and allowing the present negotiations to fail.
>
> ... to build up a peace front to the East and South-east of Germany ... Poland was the key, and Poland's position would be precarious in face of a hostile or perhaps even of a neutral Soviet Union. Our only practicable lines of communication with Poland in case of war would lie through Russian territory.
>
> We therefore wished to be assured of at least the benevolent neutrality of the Soviet Union, and better still of the probability of assistance being afforded by that country to Poland and Roumania in case of attack.

The disadvantages were, as he pointed out, that tripartite alliance with Russia might "mark a definite change of policy":

> His Majesty's Government had finally given up all hope of arriving at a settlement with Germany and that accordingly they had reached the conclusion that war was inevitable and were therefore marshalling their

> forces. ... it might be assumed that our association with the Soviet Government would still further infuriate him (Hitler -- Author) and impel him to aggressive action.

However, he concluded that alliance with Russia might

> be the only way to avert war. Germany is impressed only by a show of strength, and Italian policy has always been to reinsure with the stronger side.
>
> Therefore, ... a tripartite pact with the Soviet Union, if that is the only means by which we can be assured of the latter's support, is a necessary condition for the consolidation of the front which we have been trying to create.
>
> If the negotiations break down, ... the German Government may be encouraged to think that they are free to embark on adventures in Danzig or elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

The proposal he formulated was to meet the Soviet requirements in principle.[69]

On the 22nd, he showed the draft to Chamberlain. The latter had now come, "very reluctantly", to accept the idea of a triple pact. However, he would rather put this alliance under a "League umbrella" suggested by Hoare so that it "might later be modified" and "Britain would not be tied up for all time with the Soviet Government." Although he did not think the idea would help very much, Cadogan promised Chamberlain that he would draft something on these lines.[70]

On the 24th the Cabinet attended in full to consider the F.O.'s memo and to make a final decision on the reply to Russia. Halifax diagnosed that "reciprocity" in the Russian demands meant

> first, they were not prepared to be put in a position of inequality as compared with the British, French and Polish Governments, which had concluded agreements on a reciprocal basis; secondly Russia feared that Roumania and Poland might collapse and that, if this happened, the condition which we made that these countries should resist German aggression would not be fulfilled. Russian would thus be left face to face with Germany without any assurance of support from us.

He told the Ministers that "having gone so far in the negotiations, a breakdown now would have a definitely unfavourable effect." Although he disliked Russia, he had to contemplate that "we should be prepared to enter into a direct mutual guarantee agreement with the Soviet Government" because "Hitler was more likely to be provoked into starting a war if we failed, as a result of a breakdown with Russia."

As to some information of rapprochement between Germany and Russia, he thought this time that it "was not one which could be altogether disregarded."[71]

Supporting Halifax's view, Chamberlain argued for himself that he had adopted the negative attitude in alliance with Russia due to "considerable misgiving" from Poland, Roumania and Dominions. He "now favoured, in substance, the conclusion of an agreement with Russia on the lines of her proposals." But he supplemented that the triple pact should be put under the principles of the Covenant.

However, although they had decided to ally with Russia, it did not mean that they were to abandon appeasement. Before the meeting was over, the ministers considered the suggestion:

> when we had strengthened our position by making an agreement with the Russian Government, we should take the initiative in a renewal of the search for appeasement. When we had so strengthened our position as to have constituted the greatest practicable deterrent against aggression, we should be in a position to make such an approach from strength, and there was more likelihood that Germany would be willing to listen to us in such circumstances. Our approach might take the form of indicating that we had no intention to encircle Germany economically and that we were ready at any time to discuss any matters in dispute. ... if it was accepted it would constitute an important step towards appeasement.

Halifax thought that Germany should take the initiative this time. However, Inskip doubted whether Hitler could do so. He suggested that "we could afford to take the initiative ourselves."[72]

The next day, the new British proposal drafted on the proposed lines was sent to Moscow. Although they put the triple agreement on the basis of reciprocity, the British Government refused to name either Poland and Roumania or the Baltic States in the Treaty.[73]

2. Conversations Dragged Out: June - July

When he studied the British proposal of May 25, Molotov thought it unacceptable on the grounds that the proposal left him with the impression that co-operation depending on the League of Nations implied that the Western Powers "were not interested in obtaining concrete results". Although Seeds explained again and again that that only meant "the spirit" and "principles" of the Covenant, the Soviet Leader simply did not listen.[74] On June 2, Molotov handed the British and

French Ambassadors the Soviet counter-proposal, in which the Russians modified the principle to the end that the mutual assistance should be immediate. They insisted that the Western Powers should not only extend their guarantee to Latvia, Estonia and Finland, but also the three Powers should name all guaranteed States (i.e. Belgium, Greece, Turkey, Roumania, Poland and the three Baltic States) in the Treaty. In addition they demanded no separate peace and conclusion of both a political and a military agreement simultaneously.[75]

At the meeting of the FPC on the 5th, Halifax pointed out that if Britain and France offered a guarantee to the Baltic States, Russia should guarantee Holland and Switzerland, who were vital to the security of the Western Powers. Chamberlain thought that "we ought to refuse" the Russian demand because the Baltic States did not desire a guarantee either from the Western Powers or from Russia.[76]

Before the meeting, the Foreign Secretary had an idea to ask Russia to send a representative to Paris or London so as to discuss matter directly. Corbin, the French Ambassador, suggested that the better course might be give their own representatives in Moscow "precise instructions", on which they could push the negotiation more quickly.[77] Halifax took his idea and suggested to the FPC 1) to send some kind of mission to Moscow; 2) to recall Seeds to London for consultation. At the Cabinet meeting of the 7th, the Ministers first chose Sir William Malkin, Legal Adviser at F.O. as representative to Moscow. However, the Foreign Secretary told the Prime Minister that since his chief legal assistant was ill, Malkin could not be spared from London. Therefore both of them agreed to recall Seeds back to receive further instruction.[78] Unfortunately, Seeds telegraphed back and said that he had succumbed to influenza and was not able to return.[79]

In the meantime, Eden went to see Halifax and suggested that the latter should go himself. Since Halifax declined the idea, Eden volunteered to see Stalin. The Foreign Secretary "seemed to like it", but after consultation with Chamberlain, the Prime Minister rejected the suggestion.[80] The top British leaders were insistent that they wished to appoint a junior official to Moscow because they thought that

> it would give the impression that no great political difficulties were outstanding but that agreement in substance hand been reached and that it only remained to draft the agreement and settle the detail.

Halifax said that "this kind of business was better handled by Ambassadors."[81] In spite of the French disagreement and Churchill's criticism, they decided not to send a Minister but sent Strang, the Head of Central Department, instead.[82]

Before he left, Strang attended the FPC meeting on June 9, at which the Ministers equipped him with various memos and instructions. The British representatives should tell Russia clearly of their standpoint towards the outstanding problems between the two sides: 1) Britain and France did not agree to guarantee the Baltic States, nor did they agree to enumerate names of all guaranteed countries in the Treaty; 2) if Russia insisted on 1), the Western Powers would try to bargain that Russia should offer guarantee to Holland and Switzerland; 3) the Western Powers suggested that the political agreement would be signed before a military agreement; 4) they rejected the Russian proposal with regard to no separate peace. The key instruction given to Strang was:

> The draft treaty should be as short and simple in its terms as possible. It is better that agreement should be quickly reached than that time should be spent in trying to cover every contingency. ... this may leave loopholes in the text ... but those disadvantages are ... less serious than the elaboration of detailed provisions which, if the treaty ever came to be executed, might be found, in practice, to bind His Majesty's Government more effectively than the Soviet Government.

The Prime Minister exhorted that

> unless we showed that we were prepared to drive a hard bargain, we should necessarily get the worst of the bargain. He did not think that Russia could now afford to break off negotiation, and we could therefore afford to take a fairly stiff line.[83]

Strang arrived in Moscow on June 14 and the new round of negotiations started on the following day. The British representatives supported by their French colleagues indicated the proposed line to Molotov. The Soviet Foreign Minister, on the behalf of his Government, insisted on naming the guaranteed countries and no separate peace. He said that Russia "would prefer to postpone the whole question of guarantee ... and to confine the Treaty to an arrangement of mutual assistance among the three signatories to operate in the event of direct aggression of them" if the Western Powers did not agree to name the Baltic States in the Protocol.[84] To satisfy Russian's desire, M. Naggiar, the French Ambassador, suggested whether

these names could be mentioned in a separate document which needed not to be published. In his telegram to London on the 17th, Seeds favoured the French view that the two Governments had better meet Russia over the Baltic States.[85]

In the week from the 20th onward, the FPC and Cabinet met several times to consider the Soviet demands. Although they unanimously agreed that a breakdown on these problems was not favourable to the British interest, the Ministers had various arguments on the signature of a simple triple agreement. Chatfield was for such a Treaty on the grounds that it "would at least have the effect that it would prevent Soviet Russia from making a Pact with Germany." Hoare inclined to support his idea while Oliver Stanley disagreed to it by pointing out that such a Treaty would mean "a complete breakdown of the negotiations". "If war resulted Russia would not be involved." Therefore, it "was bound to be inoperative, and would serve no useful purpose." Although they thought there was something in the view that was in favour of simple triple agreement, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary gave more weight to Stanley's argument. Chamberlain told the Committee that the disadvantage of a simple triple agreement was "not only that public opinion would think that the negotiations had, in fact, failed but that Russia would be left in a very dissatisfied and sulky state." Halifax warned that such a Treaty

> would satisfy the tests of simplicity and brevity but it was open to the serious objection that in certain circumstances it would leave it in the hands of Russia to determine whether or not an act of aggression bringing the arrangement into operation had taken place.

It seemed that in order to break deadlock they had no choice but to meet the Russian demands. After some discussion, they agreed to accept the Russian point of view with regard to "no separate peace" provided that a settlement was reached on all other issues. As to naming countries concerned in the Treaty, Halifax told the Committee that if they did not satisfy Russia on this point, the negotiations were bound to break down. In spite of his dislike of the Russian demand, he would take Naggiar's suggestion of including these names in a secret protocol. But he proposed to do so on the condition that Russia must agree to guarantee Holland and Switzerland. His proposal was generally supported by the Ministers. It was however realised that there was little difference between enumerating the guaranteed

States in the Treaty itself and having them in a secret Protocol on the grounds that the contents of the Protocol would soon leak out. Even so, Chamberlain stressed that "it was very desirable, if possible, to refrain from including any names in the Treaty itself."[86]

Being informed of the above line, Bonnet, the French Foreign Minister, suggested some changes in wording of the proposal and urged that "Agreement with Russia should be concluded at once."[87] On July 1, the British and French Ambassadors started to communicate with Molotov again about the latest British proposal. Molotov agreed to include the names of countries in a secret Protocol but he refused to take any commitment to Holland and Switzerland. In addition, the Soviet Foreign Minister raised a new point of "direct or indirect" aggression in the Treaty, namely, the guarantee would be applied to the countries concerned "in the event either of direct aggression or indirect aggression, under which the latter term is to be understood an internal *coup d'etat* or a reversal of policy in the interest of the aggressor."[88]

The information from Moscow made the F.O. staff feel Russia had become "incredibly tiresome". In the course of discussion at the department meetings, both Halifax and Cadogan were in a bad mood. The Foreign Secretary and his subordinators were "mulish" on the British standpoint.[89] On July 4, the FPC met. Circulating the telegrams from Moscow among the Committee members, Halifax made himself clear to the Ministers that he firmly opposed the Russian definition of indirect aggression because it "was very dangerous and capable of very wide application." He laid down two alternatives of negotiation before the Committee: to break off or to fall back on the limited Tripartite Pact, of which the latter was in his favour as "our main object in the negotiations was to prevent Russia from engaging herself with Germany." He criticised those who favoured a continuance of the negotiations, saying that they must realise that "this would mean interminable discussions", but "throughout the negotiations the attitude of the Soviet Government had not been helpful." He believed that Hitler "rated Russia low from the military point of view." Even without Russian assistance, Germany would still have to face Poland, France and Britain. However, he had a tendency to agree with the omission of Holland and Switzerland from the list.

In the course of the discussion, the Ministers generally agreed with the view that they should ask Russia to abandon her definition of indirect aggression and in return Britain would exclude Holland and Switzerland in the Treaty. With regard to the signing of a limited triple agreement, opinions divided. Some Ministers such Oliver Stanley, MacDonald (Colonies), Morrison (The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster) worried that "such a pact would be a ridiculously small mouse for the mountains to have produced." The Prime Minister however supported his Foreign Minister and made a conclusion for the Committee,

> that the Soviet Government should drop their definition of indirect aggression and that we should abandon our insistence on the inclusion of Switzerland and the Netherlands... or that there should be a Tripartite Pact.[90]

After meeting, Cadogan, Sargent and Malkin drafted the telegram to Moscow. Chamberlain dictated his own definition of aggression, which turned out to be:

> the word "aggression" is to be understood as covering action accepted by the State in question under threat of force by another Power and involving the abandonment by it of its independence or neutrality (list of States).

With his approval, the telegrams were sent to Seeds on the 6th.[91]

The British and French Ambassadors took action on this instruction on July 8 and 9. In his despatches about interviews with Molotov, Seeds reported that the Soviet Government not only insisted on the inclusion of indirect aggression, but also redefined it as follows:

> "indirect aggression" covers action accepted by any of the above mentioned States under threat of force by another Power, or without any such threat, involving the use of territory and forces of the State in question for purposes of aggression against that State or against one of the contracting parties, and consequently involving the loss of, by that State, its independence or violation of its neutrality.[92]

In addition, Molotov stressed that the political covenant and military agreement should be signed simultaneously on the grounds that "without a military Agreement the political Agreement would be a mere empty declaration." For a concession, he accepted that the political agreement would be initialled and then the staff talks could start. Both Seeds and the French Ambassador observed that the Soviet

Government would not be prepared to negotiate a limited triple agreement "in the event of failure to conclude the wider Agreement".[93]

The Soviet proposal met with intensive discussion at the FPC meeting on the 10th. Halifax was completely against the new Soviet definition of indirect aggression because he thought it gave the Soviet Government "a wide right of intervention in the internal affairs of another country." He told his colleagues that the French "were much more elastic in regard to the question of indirect aggression", but they emphasised that if military conversation failed there would be no political agreement being signed. The Foreign Secretary suggested the possible course was that the Western Powers would yield to the point that staff talks "should be concluded before the political agreement was officially signed", on the condition that Russia would accept the British definition of aggression. The Ministers agreed generally and Chamberlain said that "he himself had failed to find any satisfactory formula based on M. Molotoff's formula." Despite dislike of staff talks with Russia, he approved of it because he "did not attach any very great importance" to such conversations. He tended to believe Henderson's latest viewpoint that "it would be quite impossible in the present circumstances for Germany and Soviet Russia to come together." Chatfield warned the Committee that

> the conclusion of a military agreement with Russia might be found very difficult. Up to the present we had never made a military agreement with another country and it was a grave matter to have to decide in advance...

He suggested that if staff talks started, they would have to be conducted on "high Service level" (probably the Deputy Chiefs of Staff). Halifax explained the real purpose of staff talk with Russia that

> when the military conversations had begun no great progress would be made. The conversations would drag on and ultimately each side would accept a general undertaking from the other. In this way, we should have gained time and made the best of a situation from which we could not now escape.

In the end, the Committee decided that they would agree to the Russian proposal that the political and military agreements should be executed simultaneously for a bargain to ask that Russia must abandon her definition of indirect aggression.[94]

However, when he informed Seeds of the above line, Halifax instructed the Ambassador not to offer this bargain for the time being due to "the strong objections of the French". Nor did the French agree to fall back on a simple triple agreement.[95] After eliminating divergence between Britain and France, Halifax instructed Seeds again on the 15th that the Ambassador should inform Molotov that the Western Powers were ready to start military conversations without waiting for signature of the Agreement on the condition that Molotov must abandon his demand for simultaneous signature of the political and military Agreements and meet the British definition of aggression.[96]

Two days later, the two Ambassadors had a negotiation with Molotov. Both sides were to persist on their own definitions of aggression. Molotov used the collapse of Czechoslovakia as an example to support his argument. He however said that the Soviet Government placed an emphasis on a single politico-military Agreement, namely, military obligations and contributions should have been clearly settled before this agreement was signed. He implied that if this desire was satisfied, the definition of indirect aggression was to be "a technical matter of secondary importance."[97] The French Government informed their British partners that they wanted to accept the Russian proposal for a single politico-military agreement "without further bargaining". They also suggested that they should go as far as possible to meet Russia in a definition of indirect aggression. The most important point, they stressed, was to come to agreement with Russia at once.[98]

However, at the FPC meeting of the 19th, the Ministers were still stuck on the definition of indirect aggression. Due to the pressure from the Opposition, the Prime Minister realised that if no decision one way or the other was reached, considerable trouble would have to be faced. The Foreign Secretary suggested sending to Moscow "someone of Ministerial rank" to speed up the negotiations, but the Prime Minister rejected this on the grounds that "not only would this involve a considerable delay but it would be humiliating to us." As for the staff talks, he warned the Committee that "the military provisions of a treaty would be bound to cause serious trouble." Chatfield however showed no objection to meeting the Russian demands. Finally, the Committee agreed to the suggestion by Chamberlain and Halifax that the

military conversations with Russia could not start until the agreement on the political articles had been reached.[99]

Nevertheless, in his telegram to Seeds on the 21st, Halifax seemed to exceed the Committee decision and instructed the Ambassador:

> I would be prepared in the last resort to agree to the immediate initiation of military conversations without waiting for final agreement on Articles and Protocol now under discussion. I do not like this and should only wish to advance this suggestion if danger of breakdown after you have stated our requirements seems imminent. [100]

He left it to Seeds' discretion to decide, whereas the Ambassador did not want to use "the last resort".[101] In their interview of the 23rd, Molotov urged the British Government that the Three Powers should open staff talks in Moscow immediately. He repeated that as soon as the military conversations began, definition of indirect aggression or the other outstanding points would not give rise to insuperable difficulties. Under these circumstances Halifax authorised Seeds on the 25th to inform the Russians that the British Government agreed to the Soviet suggestion but at the same time insisted that the Three Powers should continue to conclude the political agreement.[102]

In this period, while conversations with the Soviets were dragging on, the British policy-makers tried to warm up the relations with Germany. Various despatches from Henderson advised the Government to press the Poles into making a concession to Germany over Danzig.[103] On July 18, Wilson urged Wohltat, the German Commissioner of the Four Year Plan, that Germany should take an initiative to restore the friendship between the two countries and explained that the real implication in Chamberlain's and Halifax' recent speeches was that "there was still an opportunity for co-operating ... so soon as conditions had been created that would make that co-operation feasible." This was, according to Wohltat's understanding, approved by Chamberlain.[104] Meanwhile, Hudson (Secretary of Department of Overseas Trade) had an interview with Wohltat, offering a large British loan to Germany if she mended her ways.[105] But at the same time the British Government declined to approve of a loan to Poland which the latter needed to equip her forces.[106] Moreover, during the communication in July and August, they

put forward to the German representative a new proposal for an Anglo-German settlement.[107]

3. The Military Conversations in Moscow: August

Although it was an inevitable consequence that had been long foreseen, staff talks with Russia had been poorly prepared before they came on the agenda. When he replied to Halifax's question about military communications with Russia at the FPC meeting of July 19, Chamberlain said,

> he did not think that Chiefs of Staff Committee need consider the question immediately. He understood that the Sub-Committee had other and even more urgent important questions before it.[108]

A few days later, due to the Russian demand, Halifax communicated with the French Government with the proposal of embarking on staff talks with Russia. The French response was positive and they suggested that military officers should depart in next three or four days.[109] At the Cabinet meeting of July 26, the Foreign Secretary said that since staff talks were regarded by Russia "as a test of our good faith", he thought that opening these talks "would have a good effect on world opinion". Chamberlain instructed that "negotiations with Russia would continue to drag on until we made it clear that we were prepared to face the risk of a breakdown." The Cabinet generally agreed that

> our representatives should be instructed to proceed very slowly with the conversations until a political pact had been concluded. In particularly, it would be desirable that we should not allow Russia to start the conversations by obtaining information as to our own plans, but should rather endeavour to secure that the Russians let our representatives know what they could do to help e.g. Poland.[110]

Based on these lines, the Deputy Chiefs of Staff Committee and the Committee of Imperial Defence drew up a lengthy document for the guidance of the Military Mission. The formula was that until the political agreement was reached, the Delegation should "go very slow with conversations, watching the process of the political negotiations". In addition, they should state policy in "the broadest possible terms" although it was realised that the Russians were bound to want details. As for the possible question of the Polish and Roumanian unwillingness to have Soviet troops in their territory, the Delegation should persuade the Soviet Mission to accept the view that an invasion by Germany "would quickly alter their outlook."[111]

On the 31st, Chamberlain stated in the House that the British and French Military Missions were going to Moscow as soon as possible. The British Delegation was headed by Admiral Drax, and the French by General Doumenc.[112] The Anglo-French military team arrived in Moscow on August 11. When military conversations took place on the next day Marshal Voroshilov, Head of the Soviet Military Mission, told his Western partners that his Government had empowered him to negotiate and sign a military agreement with the British and French Delegations. He was disappointed by the fact that Admiral Drax had no written credentials, nor was he empowered to sign a military agreement. However, the Soviet negotiators "were really out for business" in the first few talks. They gave quite concrete details about what Russia could contribute in the event of German aggression. Under these circumstances, Admiral Drax, supported by Seeds, asked for authority to depart from vague generalities and "go-slowly" policies, and to discuss the British plan more openly.[113] Halifax, with Chatfield's agreement, sent a despatch to Moscow on the 15th, cancelling "go-slowly" instructions and allowing the Delegation to explore the British military plan with certain reservations. This instruction was carried out on the following day,[114] but it did not bring a very encouraging result because the negotiations had in fact come to deadlock two days before -- on the 14th when Voroshilov put forward three questions to the Western Delegations: in the event of German aggression would the Soviet Forces be allowed to move through Polish territory, for example a) the Wilno Gap? b) Galicia? c) would they be allowed to use Roumanian territory? The Soviet Marshal demanded "straightforward answers to these cardinal questions". Without an exact unequivocal answer, he thought that "continuance of the military conversations would be useless."[115]

After discussing with their French colleagues, Seeds and Drax sent telegrams separately to Halifax and Chatfield on August 15. Seeds suggested that since it was a "fundamental problem on which military talks will succeed or fail",

> French General Staff should get in touch with Polish General Staff and obtain their consent to the three delegations here working out general plans (for eventual action on something like Soviet lines in case of a war when Poland would agree to Russian assistance) to which Poles would meanwhile turn a blind eye.

The French Ambassador in Moscow also sent a strong recommendation to his Government.[116]

When the F.O. received these despatches, Strang consulted with Halifax and Cadogan. The Foreign Secretary considered that Britain and France "should now concert in an approach to the Polish and Roumanian Governments and put the situation frankly to them." In the Polish case they "should not press M. Beck for an immediate response", but the Polish General Staff should consider these questions. Strang sent the telegram to Warsaw, which instructed the British Ambassador to support his French colleagues in approaching the Polish Government accordingly.[117] However, the Poles' reaction was unfavourable although they agreed to have further considerations.[118] On the 21st, M. Cambon, Minister at French Embassy in London, informed Strang that the French Government decided "not to take literally the objections of M. Beck", and instructed General Doumenc to give the Soviet Delegation "an affirmative answer in principle" to the three questions. The French thought this was only solution to get around the deadlock and asked the British Government to give the same instruction to their Delegation.[119] In his minute, Strang pointed out that although they "have gone ahead without consulting us", "we cannot disavow the French Government". He suggested that a similar instruction should be send to the British Delegation to support the French. Cadogan saw this minute, but no action was taken on it because Halifax did not feel it right to do so.[120]

On the 22nd General Doumenc asked for an interview with Voroshilov. When the former told the latter that he had received the information from the French Government that the Polish reply to the passage of Soviet troops was "in the affirmative", the Soviet Marshal was not convinced. Voroshilov insisted that the negotiations could not continue because "the position of Poland, Roumania and Great Britain is still unknown."[121] On the same day, the news came out that Ribbentrop would visit Moscow to sign a Soviet German Non-Aggression Pact, which completely surprised the Polish Government. Beck told the British and French Ambassadors in Warsaw on the 23rd that

> in the event of common action against German aggression collaboration, under technical conditions to be settled subsequently between Poland and U.S.S.R., is not excluded.[122]

As for the achievement of Soviet-German rapprochement, Chamberlain seemed "quite firm about its not altering things."[123] When the Cabinet discussed the situation on the 22nd, Hoare even said, "we might be able to turn the German-Soviet Pact to good account in connection with our Far Eastern policy." Being in accordance with him, Halifax thought that "the conclusion of the Pact might also be helpful to us in our dealings with Spain." He commented that the Pact "was perhaps not of very great importance in itself", but its moral effect "at the present time would be very great." He however realised that "no useful purpose would be served by continuing the military conversation.[124] That evening, Chamberlain wrote to Hitler, indicating that Britain would fight for Poland, but he could not see "that there is anything in the questions arising between Germany and Poland which could not and should not be solved without the use of force."[125]

From the 22nd to 24th, Halifax kept asking Seeds to enquire of the Soviets whether they wanted to continue the negotiation. Molotov's reply which came on the next day was negative.[126]

A few days after the Three Power negotiations broke off, the Second World War broke out.

III. COMMENT

Both the guarantee to Poland and the Three Power Conversations were aimed at setting a deterrent to German further aggression, but neither was successful. Contemporary politicians and scholars have made various comments on these events:

The guarantee to Poland was often described as "a diplomatic revolution", marking the end of appeasement. It was, as Thorne says, "a fundamental change, on the surface at least, of British foreign policy." Eubank thinks that it "was actually more a revolution in tactics than in policy."[127] However, some historians hold a less favourable view. As Middlemas points out, the guarantee showed that "unwillingly, half-heartedly, the British Government eventually admitted that it could not relinquish interest in the balance of power in Europe." Bell's observation explores the essential meaning of the guarantee: "The guarantee was designed as a deterrent, and if the deterrent worked, the guarantee would not have to be carried out. ... As it

was, the guarantee was enough to bring Britain and France into a war over Poland, but not enough to deter Hitler from launching one."[128]

As for the question why the British Government had refused to help Czechoslovakia in 1938, but declared war in 1939 to guarantee the independence of Poland, which "Great Britain had no means of making effective", the appeasers' answer is that before collapse of Czechoslovakia, "Hitler's full intentions were still unknown" and nobody wanted to fight for Czechoslovakia. But now as "it was clear that he intended to dominate the Continent, we took up the challenge."[129] However, the appeasers do not tell the whole truth because although they knew Hitler's full intentions in 1939, they were not determined to fight a war against him.

The evidence shows that the guarantee was a hasty and ill-prepared deterrent, which aimed to convince Hitler rather than fight against him: If he continued to behave as he had previously, his aggression would be resisted, but if he gave up abuse of force, his rational demands would still be considered favourably. The deterrent lay in its political, moral and psychological value instead of military one. That was why in this period of British rearmament, despite a certain increase, it took only 7% of the national income, amounting to one fifth of German armament spending in the same period. Chamberlain, who had never accepted war as inevitable, was unwilling to prepare for something that he had never accepted. He believed that the guarantee itself would deter Hitler, so there was no actual need to carry it out. As soon as Hitler was convinced, he would go on to find a way of "meeting German claims while safeguarding Poland's independence" as he said, the guarantee was "the turning-point not towards war, ... but towards a more wholesome era, when reason will take the place of force."[130] Therefore, the guarantee to Poland was an attempt to make a certain change within the scope of appeasement. By deterring Hitler's abuse of force and convincing him to use peaceful means, it aimed to create a new and safer situation, in which the Western Powers could search and reach a settlement with Germany.

The guarantee was a failure because it did not achieve its aim of deterring Hitler. Nor did it even convince Hitler that Britain would fight. On August 22, when he instructed his generals to launch a war on Poland, the Fuhrer said,

> I have but one worry, namely that Chamberlain or some other such pig of a fellow ('Saukerl') will come at the last moment with proposals or

> with ratting ('Umfall'). He will fly down the stairs, even if I shall personally have to trample on his belly in the eyes of the photographers.
>
> No, it is too late for this. The attack upon and the destruction of Poland begins Saturday, [26 August] early.[131]

Partly because they did not expect to actually carry out the guarantee, the British Government did not weigh up very much the Soviet military assistance to Poland. It was one of the reasons that had caused British hesitation in alliance with Russia. This hesitation did major harm to the Three Power conversations.

As regards Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations, politicians and historians also have their views. Churchill thinks that if Chamberlain had accepted the Russian proposal earlier and reached agreement with Stalin, "history might have taken a different course. At least it could not have taken a worse."[132] It is quite agreeable that due to the failure of the Three Power conversations, Hitler "was freed from the danger of a war on two fronts." Some historians, in spite of doubt about whether or how far the triple pact would work, agree that its failure made the World War Two inevitable.[133] As always the appeasers tried to shuffle off the responsibility of failure upon others. Hoare argues that the principal divergence between the two sides was that the British Government did not allow Russia to occupy the Baltic States and Poland by using the excuse of offering them a guarantee. The German-Soviet pact proved Russia's double face. "It was Russian duplicity and not British prejudice that made these months of baffling discussion end in failure."[134]

It seems that all charges against Russia were true. However, Churchill, known for his anti-Communist standpoint, gave a thorough understanding of the Soviet policy as he wrote in his memoirs,

> On the Soviet side it must be said that their vital need was to hold the deployment positions of the German armies at far to the West as possible so as to give the Russians more time for assembling their forces from all parts of their immense empire. ... They must be in occupation of the Baltic States and a large part of Poland by force or fraud before they were attacked. If their policy was cold-blooded, it was also at the moment realistic in a high degree.[135]

Indeed, although their definition of indirect aggression was right in theory, it was unrealistic in strategy because the Western Powers could not stop Russia, if she

wanted, from interfering with the independence of the Baltic States in any way. In the early stages of the War, they could not save any of these small countries from becoming Russian prey by their correct definition. After all, the British Government had agreed to include these small states in a secret list of the agreement with Russia without asking their permission. In addition, while the Soviets played their game of duplicity, Britain also arranged a series of discussions with the Germans about the future settlement between the two powers.[136] Therefore, the appeasers were not as pure, noble and honest as they seemed. Although Russia should be blamed for her withdrawal from the negotiations, the British Government must bear a major responsibility for the breakdown, which resulted mainly from appeasement.

Since the guarantee to Poland was designed to be a political, moral and psychological deterrent, which would lead to the door of new settlement with Germany rather than a war against her, British policy-makers neglected the importance of Russian military assistance in the East and excluded her completely from the picture at early stage. They were never willing to face the inevitability of war and worried that an open alliance with the Soviets would raise misgivings from Poland, Roumania, the Baltic States and Dominions (this was found to have been exaggerated [137]), and above all, irritating Germany. Being blinded by their prejudice and contempt of Russia, the British leaders misinterpreted or ignored military advice in favour of an alliance. They short-sightedly chose Poland as the key ally in the East instead of the Soviet Union although they were well aware that Russia was one of the strongest powers and she possessed an important strategic position in the Eastern Europe. (In fact, Russia possessed some other advantages such as vast land and terrible cold weather in winter which had beaten Napoleon.)

All this caused a British hesitation to ally with the Soviets while the latter still considered their cooperation with the West as their first choice. Oliver Harvey commented, "What is in the back of P.M.'s mind and especially of Horace Wilson's is that appeasement will be dead" if alliance with Russia were achieved.[138] From their first approach to Russia (on March 20) to their final decision on alliance with her (on May 24), the British Government spent more than two months hesitating. If they had not wasted so much time, the Three-Power agreement would have been concluded well before Soviet-German Pact.[139]

However, even the decision to ally with Russia did not change their idea of appeasement. Their purpose was, as the Cabinet minutes indicate, that "when we had strengthened our position by making an agreement with the Russian Government, we should take the initiative in a renewal of the search for appeasement."[140] They went further and further to meet Russian demands not because they were prepared to set up a whole-hearted co-operation with her against aggression but because they were, under pressure from public opinion, afraid of a breakdown, which might result in a German-Soviet rapprochement.

The failure was also a serious consequence the pursuit of appeasement in the previous years. If the British Government had started to work on the Peace Front before Munich, it would have been more likely to succeed. Russia had been more ready to join in. They at least had sufficient time to solve their problems. Failure to execute the guarantee to Czechoslovakia shook the confidence of other countries (including Russia) towards Britain. The unilateral guarantee to Poland weakened Britain's position in negotiations with Russia because the Soviets had more options than the Western Powers: they could either join the Peace Front to fight against Germany or take the German side or keep themselves out of war. For her own security and interest, Russia was in a favourable position to raise her price again and again until she felt satisfied. The prolonged process of negotiation made the Soviets believe that the Western Powers were unwilling to satisfy Russia completely, but Germany would be able to. (Ironically, the Soviet-German honeymoon did not last very long, following a lightning attack on Russia from her former partner in 1941.)

In addition, decisions by the British policy-makers also had an unfavourable influence on the negotiations: 1) During their negotiation with Poland and Roumania, their Ministers for Foreign Affairs were invited to London. However, to pursue negotiations with Russia, the FPC sent Strang, a junior official, to Moscow rather than a Minister. This put the British representatives in an unfavourable position. In their negotiations, as Butler described to the FPC, "Molotov sat aloft enthroned with the two Ambassadors on a much lower level. ... whenever the Ambassadors attempted to maintain a sustained argument M. Molotov interrupted them by saying that the Soviet Government had given their decision and demanding that they should pass to the next item on the Agenda." Although the FPC realised

that they should have sent a Minister, it was now too late.[141] 2) As Head of the British Military Mission, Admiral Drax had no written credentials, nor was he empowered to sign an agreement. His rank was lower than Marshal Voroshilov, who had full power to negotiate and sign an agreement. Being disappointed by this, the Soviets could with some reason remain suspicious of the British motives and could close down on the negotiation.[142] 3) Military conversation was poorly prepared. Based on the "go-slowly" policy, the British Delegation were not allowed to explore their plans while the Soviets, however, gave their military details. Stalin and Molotov commented on the three power negotiations in their interview with Ribbentrop on the night of August 23 - 24 that the British Military Mission "had never told the Soviet Government what it really wanted."[143] 4) The British leaders had got stuck on the definition of indirect aggression for too long. If they had turned a blind eye to this definition and used it as a bait to rope Russia in, rather than use it as a wedge to push her out, conclusion of the three power agreement might have been achieved.

From a strategic point of view, if an alliance with Russia had been successfully concluded, it would have increased the military value of a deterrent against Germany, which might have caused Hitler to hesitate in launching a war on Poland. Even if she overran Poland quickly Germany would have been involved in a two-front war at the very beginning of War. Failure to build an alliance with Russia was a great strategic mistake and loss: without Russian assistance, the Polish defence was broken like a paper wall by a German lightning attack. Hitler avoided risking a two-front war successfully. On the other hand, according to the secret Protocol attached to the Soviet-German Pact,[144] Russia joined Germany in the partition of Poland and obtained a free hand to deal with the Baltic States on her western border. Through Soviet territory, Germany could communicate with Japan in the Far East, which made the British sea blockage ineffective. Turning the Eastern front into Germany's rear-area, Hitler was able to concentrate his military forces on attacking France and bombing England in 1940.

To summarise, appeasement was a crucial factor which led to the failure of both the guarantee to Poland and the Three Power negotiation. These two events were unsuccessful attempts of the British Government to make a certain change within the scope of appeasement. Their failure indicated that it was impossible for the

appeasers even to make minor changes of appeasement, needless to say to abandon this policy. During the nine years from 1931 to 1939, not only had appeasement become the foundation on which foreign policy was based, but also it had served as a guideline for many other fields such as the economy, trade and rearmament. Furthermore, appeasement, produced by the appeasers, in return, controlled their minds, becoming a crucial part of their diplomatic lives. Therefore, even if they realised that they were wrong, it was impossible for them to abandon their own policy as it was impossible for them to abandon their own lives and their masterpiece which they had worked on for nine years. Not until after the outbreak of War did appeasement become bankrupt, because it had lost its entire basis. However, its spirit was not completely dead until Churchill took over in May 1940. Study on the policy of that period falls beyond the scope of the present thesis, but forms the subject of the Author's *Britain and The Phoney War, September 1939 - May 1940.*[145]

1 See Chapter 5, p.240.
2 H.C.Deb. 5s. Vol. 345, coll. 438-564.
3 Nicolson, N. (ed.), *Harold Nicolson, Diaries and Letters 1930-1939*, London 1966, p.393. For similar discussions, please see: Harvey, J (ed.), *The Diplomatic Diaries of Oliver Harvey 1937-1940*, London 1970, p.269.
4 Thompson, *The Anti-Appeasers*, Oxford 1971, p.208.
5 Halifax, *Fulness of Days*, London 1957, p.200; *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, pp.269-270.
6 Feiling, *The Life of Neville Chamberlain*, London 1946, p.406.
7 Cab23/98 12(39); Dilks, D (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan 1938-1945*, London 1971, p.157.
8 Cab23/98 12(39).
9 *Documents on International Affairs 1939-1946* (I), pp.70-71.
10 *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, 3rd-IV, Nos.395, 389, 390. Although it was later proved that this information was a false alarm, Roumania was no doubt one of the next possible German victims. [ibid, Nos.404, 443]
11 ibid, Nos.393, 404
12 Cab23/98 12(39).
13 Cab23/98 13(39); Feiling, p.401; *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.161.
14 Hancock & Gowing, *British War Economy*, London 1949, pp.68, 71, 75.
15 Shay, *British Rearmament in the Thirties*, Princeton 1977, pp.271-272.
16 Feiling, pp.402, 409; Adamthwaite, *The Making of the Second World War*, London 1977, p.86.
17 DBFP 3rd-IV, N448; *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.162; *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.265; Feiling, p.407.
18 Cab23/98 13(39).
19 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.265.
20 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.161; DBFP 3rd-IV, N446.
21 ibid, Nos.469, 483, 490.
22 ibid, Nos.479, 485.
23 *Cadogan's Diaries*, pp.163-164; *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.268.
24 Feiling, *The Life of Neville Chamberlain*, London 1946, p.403; Gibbs, *Grand Strategy* (I), London 1976, p.697 footnote. The British policy towards the Soviet Union was generally based on a bitter anti-Communist stance. The F.O. always felt uneasy at the idea of establishing normal relations with the Soviet Union, who seemed a permanent potential threat to the social order of Britain and of the whole Empire because she encouraged the world communist movement by various means. In particular, since it had been decided to "come to terms with Germany", all senior officials except Van. and Collier had held the idea that Anglo-Soviet rapprochement would spoil Anglo-German understanding because Hitler would think that alliance with Russia meant "encirclement of Germany." [Manne, "The Foreign Office and the Failure of Anglo-Soviet Rapprochement", *Journal of Contemporary History* (1981), Vol. 16 No.4, pp.726, 748-749.

In Cabinet, Baldwin feared the Bolsheviks no less than the Nazis. He often said that "there were two great forces of evil at work in the world, the 'Bolshies' and the 'Nasties': fortunately the Nasties had achieved power as the instrument to destroy the Bolshies." "If there is any fighting in Europe to be done, I should like to see the Bolsheviks and Nazis doing it." Hoare held the same view. [Middlemas & Barnes, *Baldwin*, London 1969, pp.955, 961.] Before his resignation, Eden was supposed to be a minister who held mildly positive attitude towards the Soviets. Whereas, he wrote in January 1936 concerning the Russian loan proposal, "While I want good relations with the bear, I don't want to hug him too close. I don't trust him, and am sure there is hatred in his heart for all we stand for." [Manne, "The Foreign Office", *Journal of Contemporary History* (1981) Vol.16, p.749.] Both Chamberlain and Halifax were full of misgivings towards Russia. The former shared "the indignation of his party against Bolshevik propaganda". He told Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador in London, frankly in an interview in 1932 that he considered the Soviets as "enemies". Halifax disliked Russia due to the fact that the Soviets were "anti-Christ."

During the Czechoslovak crisis they were suspicious of Russia's motives for cooperation, which were, in Chamberlain's words, to pull "all the strings behind the scenes to get us involved in war with Germany." [Feiling, pp. 154, 347; Maisky, *Who Helped Hitler?* London 1964, p.26; *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, pp. 121, 290.] Russia's help was not at all considered to be of "great value" in the British eyes. [DBFP 3rd-I, N109.]

Therefore, as the issue of alliance with Russia was raised, it was considered by the policy-makers with feelings of mistrust, misgiving and prejudice from the very beginning.

25 DBFP 3rd-IV, N183.

26 Cab27/624 F.P.(36) 38th mtg. Mar. 27, 1939.

27 Chamberlain said in the House that day, "I must still maintain a certain reserve on this matter."[H.C. Deb. 5s. Vol.345, coll.1885.]

28 Cab23/98 16(39); DBFP 3rd-IV, N571; Colvin, *Vansittart in Office*, London 1965, pp.303-310.

29 *Cadogan's Diaries*, pp.164-165; *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.271; Cab23/98 16(39).

30 In fact, it was too late to hope for this because Colvin soon received a note which said, "it would be unwise if Mr Colvin gave anyone in the Reich the impression that the British Government wished to enter into relations with them." [*Vansittart in Office*, p.310]

31 Cab23/98 16(39); C.H.Deb. 5th ser. vol.345, col.2415

32 DBFP 3rd-V, Nos.61, 145.

33 Feiling, p.404.

34 Cab23/98 17(39); Cab27/624 F.P.(36) 40th Mtg.

35 H.C.Deb. 5s. Vol.347, cols.1847-1848.

36 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.163; Cab27/624 F.P.(36) 40th Mtg.

37 DBFP 3rd-V, N12.

38 ibid, Nos.52, 161.

39 ibid, N170.

40 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.279; Cab23/98 20(39).

41 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.173; FO371/23063 C5281/3356/18; FO371/22969 C5460/15/18; DBFP 3rd-V, N170.

42 ibid, Nos.172, 183.

43 ibid, Nos.193, 196. The questions put forward by Litvinov were quite commonly shared in other quarters as Oliver Harvey remarked, "The truth is no one believes we can fulfil our new commitment." [*Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.281.]

44 DBFP 3rd-V, N201; *Cadogan's Diaries*, p175.

45 FO371/22969 C5460/15/18.

46 ibid; Feiling, p.408.

47 Cab27/624 F.P.(36) 43rd Mtg.

48 DBFP 3rd-V, Nos.240, 246, 247.

49 ibid, Nos.277, 305; Cab 23/99 24(39).

50 Gibbs, p. 723.

51 Cab27/624 F.P.(36) 44th Mtg; Cab23/99 24(39).

52 DBFP 3rd-V, Nos.305, 350

53 Cab23/99 26(39)

54 Cab27/624 F.P.(36) 45th Mtg; DBFP 3rd-V, Nos.389, 397, 436. Seeds analysed that one of the reasons for Litvinov to resign was that "it might imply the abandonment of the policy of collective security, ... and decision to enter instead on a policy of isolation." On the other hand, he pointed out that "all the evidence ... in the past week would seem to show that the Soviet Government are for the moment still prepared to pursue a policy of collaboration." [DBFP 3rd-V, N509.]

55 ibid, N421.

56 Early in May, the FO received such information from various channels, but they did not think it was believable. [ibid, N377 note 2, N413 & note 2.]

57 Cab23/99 27(39)

58 DBFP 3rd-V, Nos.520, 530.

59 Manne, R., "The British Decision for Alliance with Russia, May 1939", *Journal of Contemporary History*, (1974) Vol. 9 No.3, p.22; Gibbs, *Grand Strategy* (I) London 1976, p.727.

60 Cab27/625 F.P.(36) 47th Mtg . Cadogan wrote on May 16, "our formula is so like -- or can be represented as being so like -- an alliance, that we'd better go the whole hog if we're to ensure that Russia doesn't go in with Germany." [see *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.180.]

61 Cab27/625 F.P.(36) 47th Mtg.

62 ibid; Cab23/99 28(39); DBFP 3rd-V, N527; FO371/23066 C7268/3356/18.

63 DBFP 3rd-V, N527 note 1, N589 note 1. The French Government supported this formula, and their Ambassador in London begged Maisky to recommend the formula favourably to his Government. [ibid, N550, N589 note 1.]

64 ibid.

65 ibid; Cab27/625 F.P.(36) 48th Mtg; *Cadogan's Diaries*, pp.181-182.

66 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.290; *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.181.

67 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.290.

68 *Cadogan's Diaries*, pp.181-182; DBFP 3rd-V, Nos. 576, 578.

69 ibid, N589

70 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.182.

71 Cab23/99 30(39); *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.291; DBFP 3rd-V, Nos.552, 574.

72 Cab23/99 30(39).

73 DBFP 3rd-V, N624.

74 ibid, Nos.648, 657.

75 ibid, N697.

76 Cab27/625 F.P.(36) 49th Mtg.

77 DBFP 3rd-V, N715.

78 Cab27/625 F.P.(36) 49th Mtg; Cab23/99 31(39).

79 DBFP 3rd-V, N729.

80 Avon, *The Reckoning*, London 1965, p.55; *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.295.

81 Cab27/625 F.P.(36) 49th Mtg; DBFP 3rd-VI, N5.

82 ibid, N2; Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, London 1948, pp.303-304; *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.296.

83 Cab27/625 F.P.(36) 50th Mtg; Cab23/99 32(39); DBFP 3rd-VI, N35.

84 ibid, Nos. 69, 73, 103.

85 ibid, Nos. 74, 123.

86 Cab27/625 F.P.(36) 53rd Mtg; Cab27/625 F.P.(36) 54th Mtg; Cab23/100 33(39).

87 DBFP 3rd-VI, Nos.157, 158.

88 ibid, Nos. 207, 225, 226, 227.

89 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.191.

90 Cab27/625 F.P.(36) 56th Mtg.

91 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.191; FO371/23069 C9295/3356/18; DBFP 3rd-VI, Nos. 251, 252, 253.

92 ibid, N282.

93 ibid, Nos. 279, 281.

94 Cab27/625 F.P.(36) 57th Mtg.

95 DBFP 3rd-VI, Nos. 290, 298, 301.

96 ibid, Nos. 312, 324, 329.

97 ibid, N338

98 ibid, N358; Cab27/625 F.P.(36) 58th Mtg.

99 ibid.

100 DBFP 3rd-VI, N378. This instruction was sent without either a Cabinet or a FPC meeting. No record of any discussion on it can be found in the F.O. files either.[Gibbs, p.744 footnote.]

101 DBFP 3rd-VI, Nos. 405, 413.

102 ibid, Nos. 414, 435.

103 DBFP 3rd-V, Nos. 342, 364, Appendix I (ii).

104 DBFP 3rd-VI, N354; DGFP D-VI, N716; Gilbert & Gott, *The Appeasers*, London 1963, p.217.
105 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.192; Gilbert & Gott, pp.218-222; DBFP 3rd-VI, Nos. 370, 424, 426;.
106 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, pp.301-302; DBFP 3rd-VI, N371.
107 *Documents on International Affairs 1939-46* (I), pp.323-331.
108 Cab27/625 F.P.(36) 58th Mtg.
109 DBFP 3rd-VI, N464; Cab23/100 39(39).
110 ibid.
111 DBFP 3rd-VI, Appendix V.
112 H.C. Deb. 5s. Vol.350, col.1929; DBFP 3rd-VII, Appendix II p.562.
113 DBFP 3rd-VI, N647; DBFP 3rd-VII, Appendix II, pp.558, 563, 575-580.
114 ibid, Nos. 6, 8, 22; Appendix II, pp.581-584.
115 DBFP 3rd-VII, Appendix II, p.573.
116 ibid, Nos. 1, 2.
117 ibid, N1 note 3.
118 ibid, Nos. 52, 60, 70, 87.
119 ibid, N115.
120 ibid, N115 note 1; N204; Cab23/100 41(39)
121 DBFP 3rd-VII, Appendix II, pp.609-610.
122 ibid, Nos.124, 176.
123 *Cadogan's Diaries*, p.199; DBFP 3rd-VII, N140 note 3.
124 Cab23/100 41(39)
125 DBFP 3rd-VII, Nos. 142, 145; *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.304.
126 DBFP 3rd-VII, Nos.136, 144, 223, 277, 291.
127 Adamthwaite, p.86; Feiling, p.409; George, *The Warped Vision*, Connecticut 1965, pp.198-199; Thorne, *The Approach of War*, 1938-9, London 1967, p.119; Eubank, *The Origins of World War II*, Illinois 1969, p.140;
128 Middlemas, p.457; Bell, *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe*, London 1986, p.255.
129 Templewood, pp.349-350; Halifax, pp.204-205.
130 See p. 262 above.
131 DBFP 3rd-VII, N314
132 Churchill, p.285.
133 Adamthwaite, *The Making*, p.88; Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, London 1993, p.245; Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War*, London 1972, p.247.
134 Templewood, pp.369-370.
135 Churchill, pp.306-307.
136 See pp. 280-281 above.
137 Cadogan said in his memo for the FPC on May 22 that "neither Poland nor Roumania would object to an arrangement which, while having the disadvantage of associating them openly with the Soviet Government, would secure that the latter would, in the event of war, be ready to render assistance if desired."[DBFP 3rd-V, N589.] M. Munters, the Latvian Minister for Foreign Affairs, told Halifax at Geneva on May 23 that "the position of the Baltic countries might be eased if any arrangements reached between Great Britain, France and Russia, which covered the Baltic States."[Cab23/99 30(39); DBFP 3rd-V. N591.] At the Cabinet meeting of May 24, Chamberlain insisted that alliance with Russia would meet with objection from the Dominions. In his reply to this argument, Inskip, Dominion Secretary, said that apart from New Zealand, all the Dominions recognised that "having gone so far it would be right to make an agreement rather than risk a complete breakdown."[Cab23/99 30(39)]
138 *Oliver Harvey's Diaries*, p.290.
139 General Doumenc, Head of French Military Mission, estimated in his interview with Voroshilov on August 22 that "in five or six days we could have finished our work and signed the Military Convention."[DBFP 3rd-VII, Appendix II p.611.]
140 See p. 272 above.
141 Cab27/625 F.P.(36) 58th Mtg.

142 DBFP 3rd-VII, pp. 558, 563.
143 DGFP D-VII, N213; *Documents on International Affairs 1939-46* (I), p.406.
144 DGFP D-VII, Nos. 228, 229; *Documents on International Affairs, 1939-46* (I), pp.408-410.
145 Shen, P., *Britain and The Phoney War, September 1939 - May 1940*, Department of History, Beijing Teachers College 1988.

CONCLUSION

It has been fifty years since the end of the Second World War, but arguments about appeasement still continue. After the War, historians generally held a critical view about appeasement. However, since the late 1950s there has emerged a revisionist school[1] who take a radical standpoint in justifying this policy. In addition, some historians, despite being critical of appeasement, argue in favour of it to a certain extent. It is, therefore, necessary to analyse their arguments so as to see whether there is anything in them.

Argument 1: "The peace of Versailles lacked moral validity from the start." A.J.P. Taylor comments, "This was obviously true in regard to the Germans." Some scholars share, or imply agreement with, this view on the grounds that the harshness of the Versailles Treaty including "War-Guilt" was unfairly and unequally forced upon Germany, which disturbed the conscience of the British politicians and the public. They justify appeasement because it "was based nevertheless upon a single premise, national self-determination." Therefore, Versailles had to be revised in favour of German side. "If Germany could be appeased by revision, Europe might yet avoid the chaos."[2] According to this argument, the appeasers seemed to have a case for pursuing appeasement because they should be fair and just to their opponent who lost in the gambling of the First World War. They should also be fair and just to other "have-not" powers like Italy and Japan.

The moral standard seemed so high that nobody could criticise it. But how about the Austrians, the Czechs, the Abyssinians and the Chinese? Were they entitled to the same rule? Unfortunately, in the appeaser's dictionary, there was no room for the "pig-head" Czechs, "bad-neighbours" Abyssinians and "wretched", "foolish" Chinese[3] to enjoy this treatment. It was very "moral" too for appeasers to accept Hitler's "principle of self-determination" for his annexation of Austria and Sudetenland. However, they acquiescenced in Hitler's violation of this principle when the dictator forced Schuschnigg, Austrian Chancellor, to cancel a plebiscite, which would decide whether the Austrians wanted a union with Germany on their own free will. The British policy-makers abandoned the idea of a plebiscite in the Sudetenland too because of Hitler's demand. At the Cabinet meeting of September

17, 1938, which discussed Hitler's "self-determination", the Secretary for India warned that "he was anxious not to say that we were actuated solely by the principle of self-determination. Were we to do so the Indian Congress Party would not be slow to take advantage of such a declaration on our part." Halifax agreed with him by saying that "it was undesirable to burn too much incense on the altar of self-determination."[4] It was apparent that this fairness and justice was only for the aggressors and not applicable to victim nations and colonies. In spite of being members of the League, all these victim nations had no will and no rights in international affairs. Like stakes on the gambling table, they were in the position of being controlled and dealt with by Great Powers. Chamberlain and his kind certainly bore in mind this imperialist moral standard when they formulated their policy. It should be explored and criticised, but should not be used to justify the policy. In fact, in the ambivalent nature of the Versailles that has been discussed at the beginning of the thesis, the moral value was laid in the aspect that it offered a possibility of being a deterrent against further invasion to weak powers. Appeasing "have-not" powers by sacrificing victim nations diminished the moral value of the League. On the contrary, preventing Germany from launching war by keeping her in a harsh position might be unfair and unjust to her but was fair and just to the majority of the countries in the world. After W.W.II, Germany was monitored by the Allies and separated for more than forty years; Japan is still dependent on the American security umbrella. However, few who underwent disastrous experience in the Second World War have felt pity for them. People have learned better about what fairness, justice and morality should really mean. But some of the historians are still blind to what they should have known.

Argument 2: That Chamberlain pursued appeasement "in radically different, unsuitable circumstances, may have been the fault of his judgement, but it was certainly not the fault of his intention. His aim was to preserve peace in Europe. It was an honourable quest." "It was Christian to love one's neighbour, and sound business to encourage his prosperity."[5] Eubank argued, "For Chamberlain practised appeasement, not out of cowardice or fear, but out of a positive belief that appeasement would open the way to peace for all."[6]

This is another example that attempts to balance the evil result by good intention. It is almost unassailable when these laudable words such as "peace", "hope for peace" or "love" have been, in the abstract, used to defend appeasement. However, in concrete, what kind of peace were the appeasers looking for? Their peace certainly did not include China. They did not mind how many Chinese civilians had been slaughtered by the Japanese soldiers as long as British interests in Far East could rely on the Japanese friendship. Their peace did not include Abyssinia either because they rewarded Mussolini with the Laval-Hoare plan for his launching war on that country. What they were concerned about was that British colonial interests in East Africa would not be harmed when Italy took over. Their peace was exactly the same as Mussolini's, namely, peace "of Europe". Perhaps worse than that because "Europe" here only referred to Western Europe. As to countries in Central and Eastern Europe, they were, in Chamberlain's words, the "faraway nations"[7] although Chamberlain never felt too far away to sell them up to Hitler. Therefore, appeasers' hope and love for peace were, at best, an illusion of peace in Western Europe, which, in their view, could be bought at the price of sacrificing peace in the rest of the world. It was certainly not "peace for all" nor "an honourable quest" or even a Christian's love for neighbour. Morrison, Labour leader, criticised on July 9, 1938,

> Mr Chamberlain and his colleagues talk peace not because they mean [it] but because the language of pacifism is the new political technique of the Tory Central Office. On the Prime Minister's own admission, we are living under more disturbed international conditions than at any time since the outbreak of the Great War. And I charge that British government by its betrayal of the League of Nations, its sabotaging of the Disarmament Conference and its rejection of the policy of the collective organisation of peace has made a major contribution to the wars taking place and to the unsettlement of Europe.[8]

Therefore, Chamberlain's motives were as bad as the result.

Even if Chamberlain's intentions were genuine as some historians believe, his good intentions could not be used to balance the evil result of his policy not only because historical comment emphases the result instead of motive, but also because his motive created disastrous consequences. If Chamberlain could be spared from blame because of his motives, Hitler would also be considered innocent because he, as well, did not want to fight against the Western Powers if his aggressive plan could be realised without war. Indeed, it was the Western Powers that declared war on

Germany, and not *vice versa*. In addition, Hitler expressed hope for peace in his speeches not the slightest bit less than Chamberlain. However, nobody can reduce Hitler's guilt by pointing out his "hope for peace", and due to the same reason, nobody can justify appeasement by the appeasers' motives even if these motives were well intentioned.

Argument 3: Being at odds with the orthodox view that appeasers and their policy were cowardly, stupid, humiliating and short-sighted, some scholars argue that Chamberlain "was a cultivated, highly intelligent, hard-working statesman". Appeasement "was never an apologetic, shy or shameful creed."[9]

From the process of policy making, it has been seen that most appeasers, like Chamberlain, were very shrewd politicians and diplomats. They foresaw many issues in international affairs, which turned out to be true later. For example, they previewed that the Germans would raise their demands in aggressive manner. Hitler would reoccupy the Rhineland, and made troubles for Austria and Sudetenland. They estimated Japan, Italy and Germany were three potential enemies and tried to avoid to facing the three simultaneously. All these had been considered some time before they occurred. Chamberlain and his colleagues worked very hard to deal with these problems. From looking at proposals of the F.O. and discussion in Cabinet, it is not difficult to find that appeasers had the marvellous capability of overcoming or getting around obstacles on the road to appeasement. For example, during the Manchurian crisis, Simon cleverly "warded off" charges to the Japanese for their aggression. They skilfully shuffled off responsibility for failure in Anglo-American co-operation upon the United States.[10] During the Italo-Abyssinian dispute, Baldwin's Government attempted to formulate a series of proposals -- the Zeila Offer, the Peterson Proposal and the Hoare-Laval Plan -- to sell Abyssinia without, in theory, violation of principle of the Covenant. The policy of "keep the Germans guessing" seemed perfect to deal with Hitler. During the Munich period, Chamberlain inspired Plan Z and carried it out with full courage. In addition, they discouraged the French and misled public opinion quite successfully. In this sense, the appeasers were really clever, brave and far-sighted. They were gentlemen.

However, the study of policy making also explores the other side of story. In the event of a Japanese challenge in Far East, the British policy makers ingratiated

themselves with the aggressor because they feared that British interests in Far East would be harmed if Britain offended Japan. Van confessed, "We must live from hand to mouth -- an humiliating process..."[11] During the Abyssinian crisis, they abandoned oil sanctions because of fear of Mussolini's "mad dog" action, which was highly unlikely to be launched. They "cannot afford to quarrel with Italy and drive her back into German embraces."[12] Following the same policy, appeasers would offer Hitler whatever he wanted before he asked for it because they were afraid that if these dangerous questions were raised by Germans, they would be "raised in an aggressive and threatening manner."[13] After Hitler militarised the Rhineland without giving anything in return, the Cabinet even dared not to ask the dictator to explain "the distinction between the Reich and the German nation" on the grounds that this question seemed too provocative. Although their questionnaire had been shelved by Hitler, and although they were not certain whether Hitler's ambition was limited or not, the appeasers hurried to offer the new deal by allowing German "peaceful" expansion in Central and Eastern Europe because they were afraid that Hitler might be fed up with waiting. Mr Kirkpatrick, on the staff in British Embassy in Berlin wrote on June 8, 1936,

> In a year's time it would not be we who would be addressing question to Germany..., But the Germans who would be considering whether we were worth negotiating with, or whether they would simply dictate their desires to us.[14]

This humiliating situation soon came to true. When Cabinet discussed the terms laid down by Hitler at Berchtesgaden and Godesberg, the Ministers did not deny that acceptance of these terms meant "total surrender". Even Halifax felt it was too much. However, Chamberlain bravely went to Munich and accepted this humiliation as a "victory with a honour."

When they dealt with the Rhineland, they should have, according to the advice of the Chiefs of Staff, foreseen that without the demilitarised zone they would lose deterrence to Hitler's expansion in Central and Eastern Europe. When they kept inactive during the Anschluss, they should have known if she successfully annexed Austria, Germany would surround Czechoslovakia on three sides, which would increase the difficulty in offering military assistance to the Czechs if they were attacked by the Germans. Although they formulated proposals one after another, the

British policy-makers failed to work out any effective deterrent measure to prevent things from proceeding from bad to worse, due to their short-sightedness. "Making eyes at Japan" did not keep her friendship. Roping Italy in did not result in her estrangement from Germany. Hitler was not at all puzzled by the policy of "keep the Germans guessing". On the contrary, it was the appeasers who always had to guess what Hitler's intention was and his next step in expansion. Appeasement finally created the situation that Britain wanted to avoid: facing three enemies simultaneously. In this sense, the appeasers' policy was cowardly, stupid, humiliating and short-sighted.

From the analysis above, one can deduce that the British policy makers had double personalities and capabilities. As individuals, they were shrewd, intelligent, capable and courageous; but as representative leaders of Great Britain, they were cowardly, stupid, humiliated and short-sighted. The reason for this contradiction in their personalities and capabilities was that when they made policy, they were not only private individuals, but also representatives of British Empire, which was declining. Impact of this decline caused the negative aspect in their personalities and capabilities. Since historical comment is made on their role as politicians in public life and in history, therefore, it has to emphasise the aspect of their personalities and capabilities as representatives of the British Empire.

Argument 4: Appeasement was a "realistic" and "reasonable" policy due to "British weakness".[15] It "had never meant peace at any price, but the acceptance of limited German advances."[16] Was that so?

After the First World War, Great Britain, in spite of her decline, was still a first-class power in the world. On the contrary, Germany had been terribly weakened by the victor powers. Appeasement was not realistic because it was not a policy of redressing "British weakness", but a policy that resulted in this weakness. The policy was so reasonable in appeasers' minds that they hardly believed that Hitler "would repudiate it." However, it was unrealistic and unreasonable because the appeasers had formulated this policy on the basis of an unawareness of Hitler's real ambition. In other words, appeasement was realistic and reasonable to appeasers but unrealistic and unreasonable to deal with Hitler. Furthermore, it was unrealistic and unreasonable on the grounds that although they were set back time after time, the

appeasers were still under the illusion that they could come to terms with the aggressors by pursuing this policy. It is not an exaggeration to say that Munich was a policy to buy peace at any price. The process of policy making indicates that before Hitler annexed the whole of Czechoslovakia, appeasers did not set any limit in their concessions. As long as it was by peaceful means, Hitler was allowed to take the Rhineland, Austria, Sudetenland and Danzig as well as the whole of Central and Eastern Europe. Until after the collapse of Czechoslovakia, the British Government declared a guarantee to Poland. Even so, Danzig was not unnegotiatable in the appeasers' mind. Nor did they really want to strengthen this deterrence by co-operating with the Soviets. This vague limit made Hitler misunderstand that Britain would not fight for Danzig, which encouraged him to launch war on Poland. Therefore, appeasement did not set any limit on concession until its latest stage. When appeasers set a limit, it was too late and too vague to limit Hitler.

If the appeasers and their supporters still consider this policy realistic and reasonable, one question should be put to them: "will you adopt the same policy in similar situation in the future, which would certainly lead to a Third World War?"

Argument 5: Munich postponed war and gained time for rearmament.[17] It seems really a great contribution to the world. However, according to Hitler's schedule, he had previously considered waging war with the Western Powers by 1943-45, and Munich created such favourable conditions that he successfully launched war on Poland in 1939, about 3 - 5 years ahead of schedule. What is more, if Chamberlain had taken a hard line during the Munich period, Hitler might have been overthrown by his opposition. That meant there would have been no World War Two. Even if Hitler had started the war owing to Britain's firm standpoint, it would have been a short and limited war rather than a general one because Hitler had not completed his war preparation.[18] The Western Powers, allied with Russia and other Eastern European countries, possessed strategic and military advantage. Churchill's comment is conclusive: "there is no merit in putting off a war for a year if, when it comes, it is a far worse war or one much harder to win."[19]

Regarding the view that Munich was aiming to gain time for rearmament, it is nullified because it was opposed by Chamberlain himself. At the Cabinet meetings in October 1938, he criticised the misinterpretation of Munich's aim at gaining time for

rearmament. He emphasised that the purpose of Munich was to build up good relations with the dictator powers, and that rearmament could only make them suspicious. He would reduce rearmament in due course when it was more hopeful for him to reach settlement with them.[20] If Chamberlain was still alive, he would not allow his followers to cause misunderstanding to his Munich doctrine.

Not until after Hitler's coup of Prague, did Chamberlain began to gain time. However, it aimed not at preparing for war, but at enforcing the British position. This position would put Chamberlain in a better situation in his search for a new settlement with Germany. Towards this end, total rearmament spending for 1938-39, despite considerable increase, took a small percentage (7%) of the national income, only one fifth of German rearmament expenditure during the same period.[21]

Argument 6: Related to the arguments above, appeasers and their supporters declare that appeasement was supported by majority of people in the 1930s.[22] They have ignored two important factors: firstly, from the very beginning, there was a loud voice in favour of taking a firm stand against aggression, which existed throughout the whole of 1930s. Several polls had shown that the public was not in agreement with appeasement. Secondly, according to research in this thesis and other historians' observations, appeasers deliberately misled and misinformed the public. The atmosphere favourable to appeasement was, to large extent, created by the British Government themselves, putting censorship on the media.[23]

At last, we come to Mr A. J. P. Taylor's admiration of Munich. He declares it as "a triumph", which was mentioned in the Introduction.[24] The argument for his view is, as he admits in his "Second Thought" of *The Origins of the Second World War*:

> In 1938 Czechoslovakia was betrayed. In 1939 Poland was saved. Less than one hundred thousand Czechs died during the war. Six and half million Poles were killed. Which was better -- to be a betrayed Czech or a saved Pole?[25]

Following his argument, the conclusion would naturally be: to be a betrayed Czech who survived as a slave under Nazi's mandate was better than that to be a Pole who died for his independence and freedom. He did not suggest that the British people should follow that better example so as to avoid the great loss of life during the German bombardment of Great Britain during the summer of 1940. If he had, even appeasers would not agree with him because they would at least fight for the

British vital interests, Britain's own independence and freedom, if and when they were forced to. Compared to Taylor's capitulationism, appeasement should be really admired on the grounds that it could not tolerate that Britain would live under the Nazis' protection as a junior partner or semi-colony, even though it might be very fortunate in Taylor's view.

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The appeasement-making process was a process that led to the Second World War. Offering more and more favourable conditions for the aggressors to realise their ambitions, this policy deprived Western Powers of their strategic initiative, increasing the danger of war step by step. It was appeasement and the aggressors' ambitions that were two fundamental factors which made the Second World War inevitable. Although there have been divergent views on the subject, few, including the appeasers, deny that appeasement was a failure. Henderson titled his memoirs *Failure of A Mission*. Hoare recalled the age of appeasement as "Nine Troubled Years". Therefore, it is right for historians to ask: Could failure possibly have been avoided if other alternative courses had been taken? What lessons can be drawn from this failure?

After the First World War, although America isolated herself from European affairs, although France was politically weak and although the British Empire was declining, Germany, as a defeated nation, was much weaker than any one of them. In addition, the League, in spite of not being a military mechanism, offered principles and measures (i.e. Articles 10 - 17 of the Covenant) to maintain world peace. In general, the anti-fascist countries, if they united, were much stronger than the three aggressors. Conditions were favourable for these countries to defend world peace, preventing aggression or defeating aggressors in their adventures at an early stage.

Still being a first-class power in a leading position in the League, Britain should have organised the Peace Front first rather than searching for a new settlement with the aggressors. In fact, the struggle against aggression in the 1930s offered a very good chance for anti-fascist countries to unite together. Despite its policy of isolationism, America's national interest was linked with the Western Powers in the long run. If the British Government had searched for co-operation with America whole-heartedly during the Manchurian crisis, Anglo-American collaboration might

have been achieved. As for France's weakness, Britain should have given her more support rather than discouraging her from facing the danger from Germany. In the Western view, Communist Russia was an enemy. However, it was apparent that the Soviet Union had no intention to invade or threaten the Western World at that time. On the contrary, it was she who was afraid of subversion and invasion by what she perceived as "imperialist" states. If Britain had accepted the Russian proposals, the Peace Front would have been built up, and would have been a deterrent to German aggression. If the Second World War could have been successfully avoided, Eastern Europe would not have been controlled by the Soviets later.

In order to avoid facing three enemies at the same time, Britain should, in co-operation with America, France, Russia and other powers in the League, have checked Japan, Italy and Germany one by one at the beginning of the emerging problem rather than wait until these three had achieved their rapprochement. During the Manchurian crisis, if Britain had firmly supported the Chinese struggle against a Japanese invasion, and had taken a decisive lead in imposing a boycott on Japan and whole-heartedly co-operated with America, the Japanese would not have held out very long. In the Italo-Abyssinian conflict, the situation was even more favourable to the anti-fascist powers in the sense of checking Italian aggression. If the Japanese and Italians had been defeated, not only would it have greatly discouraged Hitler, but also Great Britain would have been able to concentrate on German problem without worrying danger in the Far East and the Mediterranean.

Since the British Government did not want to attend to their military deficiency by means of economic sacrifices, they should have tried to prevent Germany from developing her military capabilities for as long as possible instead of appeasing her by conceding to her demands. During the Rhineland crisis, if Britain had backed up France and forced Germany to withdraw, it would have spoiled all Hitler's plans and prevented Germany from threatening world peace as well as the interests of the British Empire. If Britain had responded to France in firmly resisting the Anschluss, this would have seriously hindered Hitler's ambitions in Czechoslovakia. And if Chamberlain had taken hard line at Munich, Hitler might have been overthrown by his opposition.

It was less blameworthy that the appeasers did not see through the nature of German Nazism, Italian Fascism and Japanese militarism because it was a new phenomena in modern history. However, these were very blameworthy that they ruled out using force and insisted on concessions before they had full knowledge of the aggressors' ambitions. Based on their own imagination instead of solid evidence, they believed that the Japanese had no territorial ambitions in China, and that Mussolini and Hitler could be bought off. They had followed appeasement further and further without any change in direction for nine years even when the policy had been set back by one failure after another. One of the reasons that led to this tragedy was that the top British leaders had closed their minds from opposing views outside as well as from different opinions from the F.O. and the Chiefs of Staff, who should have been encouraged to give their observations more openly, more independently, and to look at the arguments from every side.

When appeasement is criticised for its unrealistic and unreasonable concessions to the aggressors, it does not mean that each and every concession is wrong, nor should any policy with conciliatory factors be misnamed "appeasement". In fact, concession and force are two closely related aspects in international affairs. In the nuclear age, due to the danger of nuclear war, concession becomes more necessary. However, force always plays a more fundamental role than concession even in these circumstances because it is a motive for avoiding the use of nuclear force that demands concessions from both sides, not *vice versa*. Generally speaking, in a world of great power rivalry and conflict, a negotiator may not get a satisfactory concession from his partner unless his diplomacy is backed up with sufficient force. Or agreement, as a result of concession, may not be properly kept even if it can be reached.

It is always safer if concessions can be made from a position of strength. Nevertheless, it really depends on the individual case as to how much force or concession is required. A policy -- no matter whether it is firm or conciliatory -- can be only judged by its result, namely, whether it works. The reason for criticising appeasement is that the policy did not work, nor did it achieve its own aims. Because it failed, the search for a possible alternative course, which might have led to success in the 1930s, was necessary. It is true that historians cannot prove

whether that alternative would have been correct simply by repeating history as chemists repeat their experiments. However, the search is still valuable because when a doctor cannot save a patient from death he must search for a possible correct method to enable him to deal with the next patient with similar symptoms, even though he may not be able to prove that this alternative method would have been capable of saving the former patient who died.

1 Adamthwaite, A. P., *The Making of The Second World War*, London 1977, p.25.
2 Taylor, A. J. P., *The Origins of the Second World War*, London, 1972, p.28; Gilbert, M., *The Roots of Appeasement*, London 1966, pp.57, 22-23, 27-29, 52, 159; Eubank, K, *The Origins of World War II*, Illinois 1969, pp.73-74; Adamthwaite, *The Making*, p.28.
3 See Introduction p.4 above.
4 Cab23/95 39(38)
5 Gilbert, pp.xii, 88.
6 Eubank, p.79; also see Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement: British Policy and the Coming of the Second World War*, London 1993, p.345.
7 George, *The Warped Vision, British Foreign Policy 1933-1939*, Pittsburgh 1965, p.xviii; Feiling, *Life of Neville Chamberlain*, London 1946, p.361.
8 Cowling, M., *The Impact of Hitler: British Politics and British Policy 1933-1940*, London 1975, p.211 footnote.
9 Gilbert, pp.159, 177; Parker, pp.1-2.
10 See Chapter 1, note 141 above.
11 See Chapter 1, p. 39 above.
12 See Chapter 2, p.80 above.
13 See Chapter 3, p. 131 above
14 See Chapter 3, p.148 above
15 See Introduction, pp. 17-18 above
16 Bell, P.M.H., *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe*, London 1986, p.247; also see Parker, p.12.
17 See Chapter 5, pp.243-245 above.
18 ibid.
19 Churchill, *The Gathering Storm,* London 1948, p.251.
20 See Chapter 5, pp. 235-236 above.
21 See Chapter 6, pp.257-258 above.
22 Templewood, p.357; Taylor, A.J.P., p.xvii; Parker, p.345; Gilbert, pp.4, 147.
23 Adamthwaite, "British Government and the Media, 1938-1939", *Journal of Contemporary History,* (1983) Vol.18, pp. 281-297.
24 See Introduction, p.18.
25 Taylor, A.J.P., p.xvii.

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